HOME SWEET HOME :

WOMEN AND DOMESTICITY IN RURAL AUSTRALIA 1930-1970

by

Karen Wood BFA (Hons)

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts by Research

University of Tasmania.

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Signed

Karen Wood BFA (Hons)

..... K Wood 31/1/1997

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Abstract

Home Sweet Home : Women and Domesticity in Rural Australia 1930- 1970

by Karen Wood

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts by Research / Tasmanian School of Art at Hobart

The topic which I have chosen to research - 'Women and Domesticity' focusing on the sub-culture of rural women in Australia from the beginning of the 1930s to the end of the 1960s - is based around the women of a small mining town, Cornwall, which is located on the Mount Nicholas Range in the Fingal Valley on the East Coast of Tasmania. I spent my formative childhood years amongst this particular community, many of whom were relatives. Because this particular community no longer exists, I needed to look at other women's groups and the history of rural women and domesticity in Australia pertinent to my women and the ideologies they had. I have sought to address these issues through both oral histories and the visual images giving emphasis to those issues which were distinctive of the lives of rural women. Areas which I have chosen to research are: ideologies of domesticity, women and food, social networks amongst women, productive activities, fashion and household technology. I chose this period in time (1930s to the 1960s) as the oral histories I have conducted recall Australian social history from about this time

onwards and also it was the period when my Grandmother married, was a miner's wife and then a shop keeper on Cornwall. Another factor taken into consideration when choosing to research this period was the fact that Australian Historians of this time had tended to focus on the lives of Australian men with women's history sadly neglected.

I found when looking at the works of other academics who had undertaken research into the history of Australian women such as Anne Summers' 'Damned Whores and God's Police', Kerreen Reigers' 'Family Economy' and Kay Saunders' and Raymond Evans' 'Gender Relations in Australia - Domination and Negotiation', to name a few, that they had tended to concern themselves mainly with urban women and their lives basing their findings on the quantitative analysis of data rather than employing the ethnographic 'qualitative text analysis' method which I adopted. I found using this method of research that I was able to obtain a more personal insight into the lives of the women. Also from an archival point of view, these oral histories become tangible records of Australian social history.

This material provided the basis for my visual images which present my understanding of the daily lives of the women from my childhood, the oral histories being used as a catalyst for my own memories of this period.

I concluded from my research that rural women (especially those living in mining towns) had tight-knit communities in which traditional conceptions of women's roles as being primarily in the home were strongly entrenched. While during this era (1930s - 1960s) there were marked changes in the roles, values and expectations of city

women, in the country, things changed much more slowly. While from the perspective of urban dwellers, these closely bonded communities probably appear claustrophobic, the country women themselves in the main did not feel this way as they knew no other way of life. It is this that I seek to convey in my prints.

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1) Introduction

The topic which I have chosen to research - namely Women and Domesticity focusing on the sub- culture of rural women from the nineteen thirties through to the late nineteen sixties- is based around the women of a small mining town, Cornwall, which is located on the Mount Nicholas Range in the Fingal Valley on the East Coast of Tasmania. I spent my formative childhood years amongst this particular community, many of whom were relatives.

Cornwall was primarily a coal mining township, there were some men who worked for the local forestry industry but the men of the area mainly worked for the Cornwall Coal Company. When I came to this community in the early nineteen sixties, the mine had just closed and the majority of young families dependent on the mine for their livelihood had moved on and those that remained were either retired or able to find work with the local forestry industry. Some did choose to travel to Fingal to work and therefore remained on Cornwall[1] but the hustle and bustle of Cornwall had gone.

The women of the community were generally all housewives who did not work. Those who did work were either single or widowed, and this was usually in the capacity of shop assistant. The women who were at home took great pride in their homes and their household labours, their community activities and in the social networks that were available. They were very industrious within the home, making their own preserves, jams, sewing, knitting and generally using their own skills to make ends meet. They appeared to be quite content with their 'lot in life' and the women seemed to enjoy each other's company. There had been within this subculture, women's groups such as The Country Women's Association, the Church

Guild, Mother's Union and Home League which was run by the Salvation Army. Una Camplin writes of her memories in The Valley And East Coast Voice in an article titled 'Cornwall - The Way It Was'.

> Cornwall at one time boasted about 140 houses. These homes, some only two rooms, were always warm, clean, homely places always with a bright coal fire, always white ochred hobs, never allowed to get dirty, lino covered floors with rag pegged mat at the hearth. Cooking was by a wood stove which was always blackleaded everyday. You could see your face in them.
>
> There were four general stores, plus baker and a butcher. In those days our groceries were delivered to the door, also our bread and meat. Now we haven't any. The post office was also a great meeting place. In the early days, the community spirit was great. Everybody worked together whether for the churches (we had two) or the school, for the Red Cross or the Comforts Funds. The musical talent was outstanding. We had the Cornwall orchestra for our dances, plus the mouth organ band and the band under Mr Jack Madden. It is hard to put into words the spirit which was Cornwall's[2]

The distinct features of these women which I remember most were the continual cooking, cleaning and other rituals which monopolised their days. Another distinct

characteristic was the local gossip which was delivered by means of 'over the garden gate' or by the numerous women who passed in and out the back door with the latest edition of who was doing what, who was on with whom, and who had passed away. These visits occurred as women passed by attending to their daily business such as collecting their mail from the Post Office or going to the local shop. This daily ritual involved numerous cups of tea being drunk as the news was imparted. With a lack of telephones within the community, this was the main means of communication and the women in general savoured it with much delight. I remember quite clearly the words which often followed these offerings of juicy information - "don't tell anyone I told you but did you know. . ." and of course this would be imparted to the next visitor who would swear they wouldn't tell a soul.

Of course life on Cornwall was not always 'rosy', but as a child I was not privy to events of sadness, the financial worries or the stresses of life - mine was an insular childhood. This also relates to the fact that this was a time in Australia where children in general were 'seen and not heard' and when visitors came or when you went to visit another family, the children were relegated to the verandah or backyard and the adults gathered together within the home. Although in presenting visual imagery of this community, it will be viewed from the standpoint of childhood memories, the written research will be a more critical analysis of this subculture.

So, looking at this subculture and having been a part of this small community there are certain aspects peculiar to this group of women which I wanted to research. Because this particular community no longer exists, I needed to look at other women's groups and the history of rural women and domesticity in Australia

pertinent to my women and the ideologies they had. Areas which I have chosen to research are : ideologies of domesticity, women and food, social networks amongst women, productive activities, fashion and household technology. The period of time in question is the nineteen thirties through to the late nineteen sixties. I chose this period in time as the oral histories I have conducted recall Australian social history from about this time onwards and also, this was the time when my grandmother married, was a miner's wife and then a shop keeper on Cornwall.

When searching for books on the subject of rural women and domesticity from the nineteen thirties through to the late nineteen sixties, it became quite apparent that not a great deal had been written on this topic.

Saunders and Evans write of this oversight in literature pertaining to the earlier years in Australian history:

> Before the advent of feminist scholarship in the 1970s, Australia's history was certainly a simpler and, thus a seemingly more self-assured discipline. With men's activities always foregrounded and women invariably removed from the picture there was, to begin with, a lot less explaining to be done. For with 'women' vaguely conceived and dismissed from analysis as a biological constant, and 'man' ensconced as a free-ranging entity, whose gender identity remained masked and unproblematical, social relations between these two population halves were rarely, if ever, considered an historical

> question worth posing in anything more than a flippantly entertaining manner.[3]

Saunders and Evans go on to argue that Australian history was dominated by male historians who wrote as if their gender spoke for the species.

> Writing and teaching thus, without ever encountering much challenge, it seemed enough for them to reiterate the complacent doggerel, 'Geography is about maps/History is for chaps', if ever the subject of male disciplinary monopoly required contemplation. But if the basic injustices of women's historical invisibility was further pressed, it might be reassuringly added that whenever words like 'mankind' were used, they automatically included women too. In practice however, when phrases such as 'the Australian people' which peppered the historical account were employed, they normally encompassed only the public world of adult, Anglo-Australian males'[4]

While in the 1970s, some historians began to undertake research into the history of Australian women such as Anne Summers - Damned Whores and God's Police, Kerreen Reigers' Family Economy and Kay Saunders and Raymond Evans' Gender Relations in Australia - Domination and Negotiation to name a few it is obvious that

they have tended to concern themselves mainly with urban women and their lives, basing their findings on the quantitative analyses of data.

With the lack of literature on my area of research being a stumbling block, I felt the best way to approach this investigation was by the grass roots method of actually interviewing women and women's groups and hence began a lengthy and prolonged period of oral histories. The women interviewed for my research came from all walks of life and their age groups ranged from the mid twenties through to women in their ninetieth year. While I focused on rural women, I also interviewed city women in order to discern what was unique to the culture of rural women, and in particular to those within a rural community. I spoke to women in group situations such as The Country Women's Association, craft groups, groups of women who were of a common age and individuals of varying ages. The interviews were kept as informal as possible and these gatherings often became scenes of continual laughter and leg slapping with copious amounts of tea and cake consumed. The constant clacking of knitting needles was part and parcel of the more mature age groups to which I spoke whereas with the younger groups this was not as apparent. In general, most were rather bemused that I was wanting to research women and their lives in relation to the home as they were of the opinion that to others, their 'lot in life' would be of little interest. As a consequence, it quite often took some time before the women openly talked of their lives, their ideologies and the daily rituals of domestic life which had or still do to some extent govern their lives. Once the initial wariness of the situation had passed, the women spoke with much enthusiasm of their lives and the pride they themselves had in being 'homemakers'. I found using this method of research that I was able to obtain a more personal insight into the lives of the women and still make

conclusions based on their oral histories rather than on statistics. Also, from an archival point of view, these oral histories became tangible records of Australian social history which was an important factor in my method of recording my research.

Visual records pertaining to 'Women and Domesticity' were also scant and images of 'everyday events' in the lives of rural women were non existent. The only images which did relate to women and the home were located in advertisements in magazines such as The Australian Women's Weekly, Woman's Journal, Australian Woman's World, Pix, Woman's Day and Homes and Gardens. These images were highly idealised images of domesticity consisting of exaggerated cameos of urban women. For this reason I 'created' my own photography of this period based on my own memories of this period using models and props appropriate to the topics I wanted to depict. This proved to be a worthwhile exercise with the photography proving to be crucial to the actual composition and content of the prints.

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The Australian Women's Weekly. December 16, 1944

Pride of her Household

A carefree, modern mother whose joy of living and wise home management make her the pride of her household—and their home the pride of them all . . . .

For in their home is Gas of course . . . .

An automatic cooker that simmers a dinner to mouth-watering tenderness. Instant hot water that makes kitchen days—carefree days! Healthful heating for cosiness and warmth. Silent refrigeration to keep foods flavoursome and fresh. Brighter, easier living for a happy household — thanks to Gas!

GAS for the 4 Big Jobs— *Automatic* **COOKING** ★ *Silent* **REFRIGERATION** ★ *Instant* **HOT WATER** ★ *Healthful* **HEATING**

AN ADVERTISEMENT OF THE NATIONAL GAS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

The Australian Women's Weekly. November 9, 1946

Choose your Shelvador from the CROSLEY LINE at your CROSLEY dealer.

The Australian Bride. Autumn 1956

Six lively youngsters keep her hopping...

..but good, pure VELVET SOAP keeps their clothes sweet and clean"

says *Aunt Jenny*

No "black" Mondays for happy Mrs. Snashall of Bedford Park, W.A. Even on the day she does her BIG wash, she finds time to stage a party for the kids. Velvet's extra-soapy suds get clothes clean so *quickly* with no hard rubbing.

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Balancing act with a sparkling Velvet-washed tumbler rounds off the last washing-up of the day. With Velvet suds the dishes are done in no time. (And thrifty Velvet helps so much to balance the budget, too!)

Velvet
PURE SOAP

GOOD PURE SOAP

Kind to hands and clothes – fast and thrifty for dishes.

The Australian Women's Weekly. February 4, 1959

2) History of Women and Domesticity in Rural Australia - 1930s to 1960s

In order to set the context for an understanding of the subculture of rural women in the period from the nineteen thirties to the late nineteen sixties, we need to look briefly at the social and economic factors shaping the role of women during this period.

The nineteen thirties or as they were better known 'The Depression Years' were very hard times economically. There was very little work for men and basically none for the women in rural areas. Ultimately, this was still a time where it was made abundantly clear that the woman's place was as the 'homemaker' and those who challenged this traditional role of women were frowned upon as they were seen to be taking the jobs of men who were the traditional providers.

> The economic depression of the 1930s effectively silenced the debate, as women, married and single were used as scapegoats to 'explain' the depression, commonly being accused of taking men's jobs. The employment of women was considered unimportant, and the increasing hostility towards married women workers was related to the idealisation of marriage and maternity, and the assumption that women had no right to work.[5]

Many women used their home skills such as sewing, to make ends meet and recycling became second nature to most households. Nothing was thrown away that could not

be utilised in some way by the housewife and she became very economical in her role. Rationing of food also came into force in some areas and this was a means of help for those families who had no means of support. In some towns, men took to the roads looking for work to support their families which they had left behind while others were fortunate enough to get part time work. In my particular community, it was also very hard to find work and the miners were given one day one week and two days the following week. This pattern of work continued for quite a long period of time, but generally, no-one had money other than for necessities. Anne Summers writes of this period in relation to women;

> . . . the images which have been handed down convey almost exclusively the male experience of the Depression; we have been told little about what it was like for women during the 1930s. None of the folklore tells us whether women's experience of the Depression differed from men's and, if so, how. [6]

On the homefront, the women had to deal with the realities of trying to budget on limited funds, the pacifying of their partners who had no work and they were expected to relieve the burden of the physical and psychological trauma of their partners which was not often reciprocated. The Wall Street crash had a major effect on rural Australia. The prices of commodities dropped, the price of wool and wheat also plummeted and farmers walked off their properties. Helen Townsend in her book Serving the Country writes of this period for rural women in general;

> Many girls were unable to get jobs and were tied to the home. One woman recalls being paid 2/- a week for helping at home on the farm. Some went into service. Some, who were competent dressmakers, could supplement their family income by taking in work. When cash was scarce, payment was made in eggs or dairy products. Even retailers in towns were forced to accept goods such as wheat and sheep rather than cash or long term credit. But, often the sheep were too thin to kill. [7]

Clothing was scarce and many women in rural areas improvised with 'found' objects.

> Lillian's children had no shoes and improvised with sandals made out of tyres. Local farmers wore trousers made from wheat or chaff bags and women spent many hours sewing flour bags into everything from underwear to frocks. [8]

The Depression was instrumental in drawing rural women together in hard times and The Country Women's Association established health centres and hospitals and supported the bush nurse. Through The Country Women's Association, rural women gave generously to those families in need and offered household items and food in short supply.

The outbreak of World War Two called for more female labour to firstly replace the men who had gone to war and also to work in the factories producing goods for the

war effort. Women were this time permitted to enlist in the services, unlike the First World War when very few women ventured away from Australia's shores. This changed further on into the war years when women were conscripted into the services to help with the war effort Women also worked in fund raising capacities and made articles to send to the men overseas. This was organised through the Comforts Funds, The Red Cross and The Country Women's Association. With the bombing of Pearl Harbour, the war effort in Australia intensified and more man power was called for. Women were placed in the predicament of being needed outside the home as well as being needed within the home. The life of the housewife became far more difficult with the rationing of clothes, food and petrol. Queuing became a common factor in everyday life for the housewife and the hard time experienced financially in the Depression years continued. In rural areas, the women worked for the war effort by knitting, sewing and making garments for the men fighting in the services. Camouflage netting was also made in large quantities by the women of The Country Women's Association in many parts of Australia and by the end of one year, over half a million camouflage nets had been made. The women of Cornwall were in the main able to maintain their traditional role as housewives and homemakers as the men of Cornwall who worked in the mine were not allowed to enlist in the armed forces as they were needed to maintain the coal output for the war effort.

> . . . some did, but not too many because seeing that they were, you see they needed the coal for the war effort to fire up the big boilers and things like that, to make the guns and rifles and things you see they weren't allowed to enlist, so it was only the younger people, the elder one, the fathers they

didn't go, they'd gone in the first war, the younger ones they did.

(Cornwall housewife, aged eighty)

This scenario was typical of the women of Cornwall who mainly worked for the Red Cross, Comforts Funds and The Country Women's Association, making items for the men in the services or items which could be sold to raise money to send directly to the various charities involved.

. . . but during the war years there was all those lovely socials down in the hall, you see, they were the things and concerts for the Comforts Funds and when someone went away to war we would give them a big send off.

(Cornwall housewife, aged seventy)

My Grandmother recalls the work she did for the Red Cross when she lived on Cornwall during the war years;

. . . I did a lot of sewing for them, the Red Cross used to send us things cut out to make, I got all the flannels with the cuffs, shirts and the flannels and the underpants the others got and we, oh we had fairs and we worked like billy-o to get money for the Red Cross.

(Cornwall housewife, aged eighty six)

Following the war, the home was once again being championed as the centre of women's lives and the role of homemaker conveniently re-emerged. This transition was not as difficult for rural women as most had stayed mainly within the confines of domestic work, making items for the war effort and raising funds for the various charities which had operated in this period.

The post war years were marked by an increase in the manufacturing industry and for many in urban areas, the emergence of the suburban dream. Areas of food processing in general increased and 'mod cons' for the up-to-date housewife flooded the consumer market. In order to purchase these goods, some women found it necessary to find paid labour outside the home, since the husband's pay packet could not extend to these extra costs. In the cities, more people owned their homes and items such as refrigerators and washing machines became 'necessary' items for the modern housewife.

In rural areas however, this trend did not follow to the same extent and many continued to use items such as the meat safe and the copper. Michael Bosworth writes of household technology in rural areas of Australia:

> There was a difference between the country and the city in the way domestic technology was used. In country houses there was often a marked lack of comfort. Country houses, less aided by modern sources of energy than city households, were

> more dependent upon the home skills exercised by whoever was running the house.[9]

On Cornwall, household technology underwent little change and many, like my grandmother, continued to use methods which had been used by their mothers. My grandmother continued to use the meat safe until the early nineteen sixties and the copper was also still operational until the early nineteen sixties. My grandmother finally had hot water within the home in nineteen sixty three. Often the costs of these new household items was a factor, and as many on Cornwall were 'just making ends meet', these items were out of their reach when they first became available on the Australian market. As one rural housewife recalls:

> Um a table and a chair, two chairs. A wood stove that I used to clean with 'zeebo' and you pour the zeebo on when the stove was just a little bit warm and spread it out all over and then you polish it so as it all shone beautifully. (and you could be so proud then couldn't you?) oh yes it looked lovely, it looked lovely . . . it was a metal sink and it was sunk into a cabinet that he'd made for us. And there was (that was luxury wasn't it with a drain that went outside!) .that's right when we were first there the kitchen sink was there and it had a plug hole but it wasn't connected to anything and I kept forgetting and tipping water down the sink and it would just go into the cupboard underneath. So I had to put a bucket in there to remind myself, but I got used to it after a while. .One

of the most annoying things was when he put the tap in. There was one kitchen tap about that far off the floor, which was about eighteen inches, but it came in over the wood box so that if you filled the woodbox without thinking you had to move the wood away before you could turn the tap on, which was very annoying. But you thought that you were well off because at least you didn't have to go outside to the tank. (Yes, oh yes, and then in time we got the water over the sink . . . we never had hot water on there.

(Nubeena housewife recalling the early nineteen sixties)

Similarly, another country woman recalls of the 1950s,-

When I first married I went to live in what was then a condemned cottage, it had been used as a shearing shed but we did it up with a lot of friends. We took the shingles off the roof, no we didn't we left them on, and just put galvanised iron over the top. And we lived there with no electricity and no water, no there was one tap in the house. And I used to do my washing in a big jam pan thing. I'd boil everything in it or otherwise do the handwashing outside. We had a wash tub and a tank stand outside. That was okay in the wintertime but in the summer when the march flies were around you and you were standing there doing the washing with bare legs. Oh I can still remember it. The agony. The agony and trying to

> dance around and get the march flies off my legs. But, um, I had five children in that house, they used to sleep around and about, if they howled too loud they went out into the back shed so I couldn't hear them. But I considered myself very happy. I didn't consider myself put upon. When I look back now I think, by golly, you know, I shouldn't have put up with that.
>
> *(Nubeena housewife, aged seventy three)*

In rural areas, 'priorities' also were a factor in the way that the home was modernised and for some on rural properties the importance of the farm outweighed the importance of basic conveniences for the housewife.

> We never had hot water on there. In fact we did have power on then, no, no we didn't. Remember when I went to use it I ran a lead across from the shearing shed, see things have to have their priorities, there was power at the shearing shed, but not at the house. Yes, yes because it was more important.
>
> *(Nubeena housewife, aged sixty five)*

While the shopping routine for the urban woman changed with the advent of the supermarket and with better refrigeration in the home which meant that women did not have to shop as frequently for meat and perishables, in rural areas the impact of these changes was less. In my particular area, Four Square Stores did exist, but for general purposes, the local shop continued to operate and generally in most areas life

lagged behind. On Cornwall, many continued to collect their milk daily in the billy can from those who had their own cows and sold milk, the butcher delivered meat two and three times a week from St Marys after the butcher's shop on Cornwall closed and most had their own fowls and vegetable garden.

Travelling hawkers also brought goods to the women of Cornwall who obtained these items on hire purchase. Many items were purchased this way and the Coogans man would call once a month to collect payments.

> . . . everything was hire purchase, we never had any money, we were paying off a block of land. I can remember they come around every month and collected instalments on your furniture. Oh, always once a month and collected your payment, that had to be there, strikes or no strikes.
>
> *(Cornwall miner's wife, aged seventy two)*

While the nineteen sixties saw great changes for the lives of urban women with the rise of the Women's Liberation Movement, in the rural areas, old attitudes were harder to shift. The Country Women's Association for instance, argued that

> Marriage with motherhood is a full time job and a very rewarding one and it is simply not possible to satisfactorily serve two masters - a job and a family. It is the fashion now to deride domesticity and its attendant chores as dull and boring, with outside occupation a necessary means of escape. It

> certainly need not be; there are many ways of filling any spare time one may have, joining the CWA for instance.[10]

In my research of this period, I found that the vast majority of my participants did not work and explained that this was due to their own desires to stay within the home. Many did seasonal work such as 'apple picking' which brought in pocket money as they called it, or sewed for others, but generally they did not have employment on a regular basis outside the home. It would appear that their needs for consumer goods and gadgetry were not as great as those in urban areas, their financial situation was not very secure and for those who had husbands, entering into paid labour was a rather 'touchy' area as this was a time for many in rural areas where the man was still the 'breadwinner'. From the scant information I have in relation to my own community, it would seem that the life style for rural women was far more basic than for those in urban areas. Change was slow and many continued to use household methods and equipment which were outmoded for their time. When queried about this it was said that 'we didn't know any different and we were quite happy, that was our lot in life'.

3) Explanation of Visual Imagery

Having outlined the social and economic factors affecting the lives of rural women in the period from the 1930s to the late 1960s I now want to focus on my imagery which deals with the sub-culture of the women of Cornwall.

My images are essentially tableaux of my memories and as a collective group of prints give an insight into this time and my own interpretations of this period, its impact on my self identity and the attitudes I have towards this particular group and their outlook on life.

To create tableaux of this particular community, I found it difficult to rely on memory which was proving to be insufficient to produce 'realistic' imagery. Also, as stated earlier, due to the lack of visual documentation of this particular period in relation to 'Women and Domesticity', other methods of visually recording my subject matter were employed to fill the void. To overcome this difficulty, I decided to use models to help in the creative process. Having in mind the images I wanted to create, I and the models went out on location and did numerous 'photo shoots'. I photographed them in various poses doing things such as making jam, shelling peas to applying makeup. These photographic sessions usually lasted some two hours and as a result of these sessions I was able to bring together images which when amalgamated, formed the basic composition for the overall prints. I was conscious of the fact that the models would have to be of an age which was comparable to the women of the community that I had been a part of and therefore the models are in the main in the seventy to late eighty age group. One model was the exception to the rule, since she was in her late forties. Of course there were younger women on Cornwall such as my

'SHELLING PEAS'

(Photography)

'THE BUS STOP' (Photography)

mother's generation and therefore in some of the prints this age group will be represented. Having the right 'look' was also important and the models dressed accordingly. This proved not to be a problem as their mode of dress had changed little over the years and they seemed to have an abundant supply of aprons, hats and handbags for all occasions. As a means of verifying 'dress codes' for this period, I also employed the use of many old women's magazines so that the women portrayed in the prints are more realistic and can be associated with this particular period in time.

Locating interiors which were of that period was a problem and I resolved this by photographing rooms in historical homes which had been preserved for the public as well as using magazines and literature pertaining to Australian interiors to authenticate the backgrounds of my prints. The women who modelled in these photographic sessions were very easy to work with and they thoroughly enjoyed these sessions which is reflected in the photographs produced. Often the women forgot about the camera and became engrossed with each other and what they were doing and it was at this time that the photography was most successful.

I have mainly chosen to use imagery which is broadly suggestive of the social culture of the women of this small country town which aligns itself with the topical areas I have outlined as my research. These are: fashion, women and food, social networks amongst women, productive activities, household technology and the ideologies of domesticity. Again, I am relying on my own experiences in creating imagery. Thus, events which I never experienced such as the activities organised by The Country Women's Association and Mother's Union for example, will not be addressed visually

but will remain a part of the documentation pertaining to this sub-culture. Another issue of which I was most conscious was the number of prints which would be produced in order to convey to the viewer an insight into my experiences of this particular community and its impact on myself. Instead of producing a large volume of images to cover various aspects, which I felt would make the work far too literal, I instead decided to create a smaller body of works which were multi-layered and dealt with various topics within the one image. I felt this would make the overall 'look' of the work less repetitive and more compact.

The prints are all black and white and I haven't felt the need to introduce colour to the imagery. I want the viewer to see colour where there is no colour. By this I mean that the viewer has to colour the images with their own experiences. The use of black and white only, lends to the work connotations of dealing with past events, and evokes a sense of nostalgia.

The use of patterns in my work operates on various levels and they are used intentionally. The use of recurring patterns and motifs on the different characters' attire is a means of communicating my own view of these individuals to the viewer so that one is able to respond to the mood which I am creating within the work. It has often been suggested that pattern and fashion are indicative of the character of an individual and we as individuals perceive people's character by their attire and the patterns which adorn them. Joanne Finkelstein writes of this in her book The Fashioned Self:

> We know that appearances are created and that dressing after a particular fashion is done in order to convey a certain impression. It would seem that the ideas we hold about personal identity, incorporating as they do these divergent views, suggest that our knowledge of human character and our speculations about the nature of our own consciousness and that of others are incoherent and unsystematised narratives, interwoven with contradictory ideas and assumptions.[11]

The use of the patterns has also been a device for placing the work within a time frame. Patterns and motifs are continually changing and the ones which I have incorporated into the imagery are based on those used in the era with which I am dealing and these again were researched using magazines and literature dealing with textile patterns. The use of patterns is also a way of uniting the different areas located within the one image together and heightening the overall visual impact on the viewer. The ornamentation of the interiors is also an intentional ploy by which I can impose my view of a particular event onto the viewer. The interiors are reminiscent of stage sets, thus imparting a sense of theatricality to the action taking place in the foreground.

Oscar Wilde's view aligns itself with that of mine when he writes that:

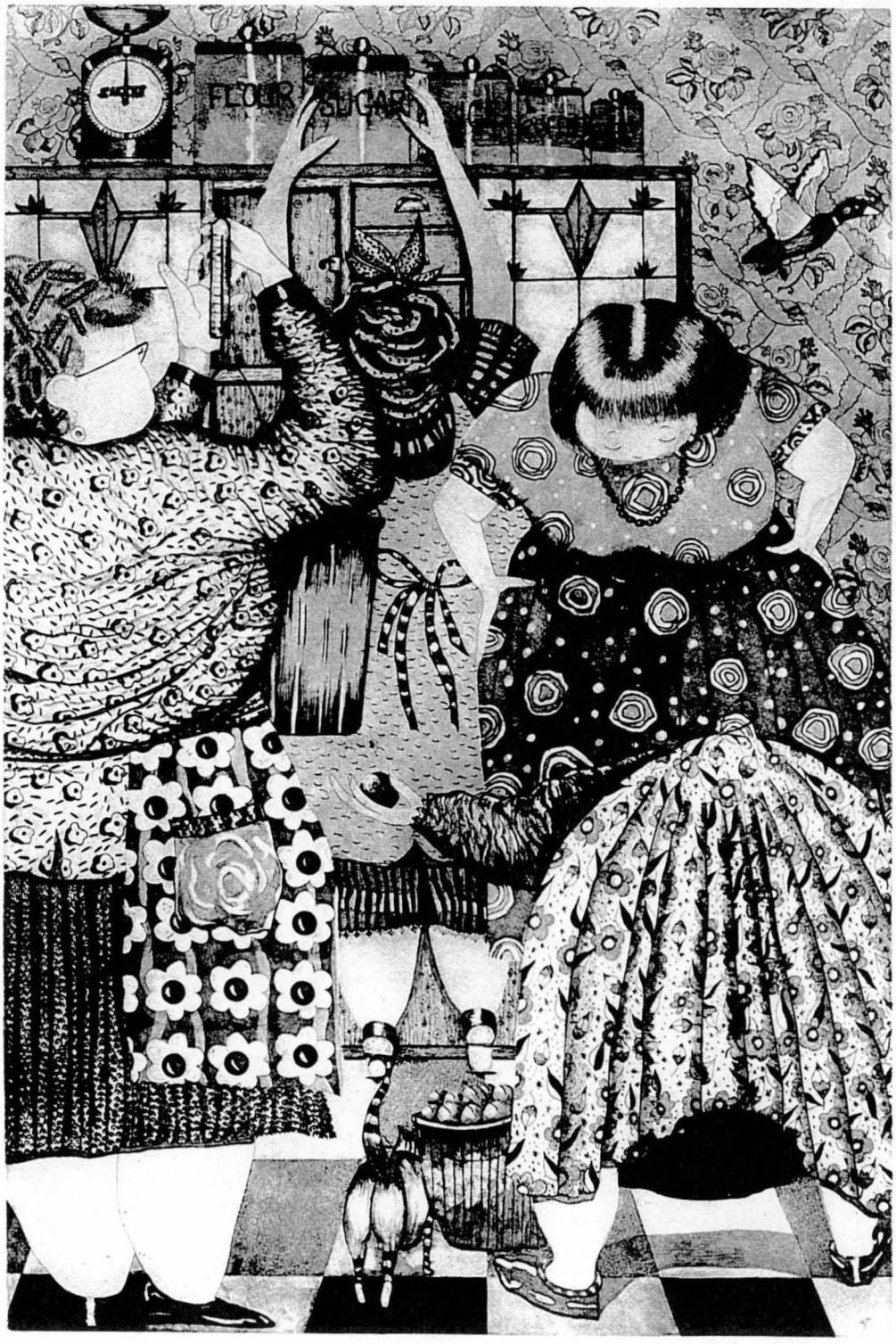
> The art that is frankly decorative is the art to live with. It is, of all visible arts, the one art that creates in us both mood and

> temperament. The harmony that resides in the delicate proportions of lines and masses becomes mirrored in the mind. The repetitions of patterns give us rest. The marvels of design stir the imagination.[12]

Humour is also an important element within my prints. I never intentionally set out to contrive my work in this manner but feel that humour becomes interwoven within the imagery due to the subject matter which I use. I feel quite at ease with this element in my work as it defines my own feelings towards this community and the women and how I perceived their social culture. Being a part of this small insular community was a most enjoyable experience for me and if this is apparent in the work and is experienced by the viewer, then I feel I have succeeded. I should also state here that my intention is not to 'send these women up' but instead to express fondness for these women and the point of the humour is to evoke the character of these women who were larger than life and confronted life with a positive attitude.

The Jam series is based on the themes of women and food and productive activities. It would appear from my research that making jam for many women was a way of life and that whenever fruit and berries were available, you would make jam as often as you could. It was a part of the daily diet and great amounts were made during the year to feed the family. It was part of the ideology of being the self-sufficient housewife. You did not buy jam from the local store since for the budget conscious housewife this was just plain extravagance. It also reflected on the women's capabilities of tending to the family's diet. This ideology was not only restricted to the making of jam but extended to other items such as preserves, cakes and biscuits and

'JAM' (Photography)



JAM 1

JAM 2

JAM 3

bread. All that could be made by the housewife was only the bare essentials such as flour were purchased from the local shop.

A past resident of Cornwall speaks of the self-sufficiency of her family:

> . . .Oh, no that was extravagant, and you dare not buy a tin of anything that was shocking Yes, oh no you had the fruit while it was on the trees, stewed it and whatever. And there wasn't, you didn't buy anything in a tin, it was all done up in paper bags, you would buy half a pound of this and half a pound of that. It was most extravagant to buy a tin. Well you would buy the bags of rice and sago you know and flour I think mum had a cow and made her own butter, most of the time.
>
> *(Cornwall housewife, aged eighty seven)*

Similarly, another housewife recalls:

> You always made your jam, never ever bought a bottle of jam that was waste. Old beer bottles and Mum had a ring on her iron thing, a handle that she used to put, Bob would have to do that, it was his job to put it in the fire and then go out and the beer bottles you know the big bottles he would have to put this thing around it, it was something wet on the bottles or something I can't think now and put that round it and then

> that would crack the top off, then you had to file that down with a file, old file, file all down around it and that's where Mum put the jam.
>
> *(Cornwall housewife, aged eighty seven)*

The varieties of jam available were limited only by the supply of fruit and on Cornwall there was a large range of fruit grown which could be mixed and matched to make many different jams.

> Well the men had to take their lunches to work, but see, where you can go and buy ham today there was nothing like that in them days. There would be only bread and jam. Grandad would save me one and it would be in the mine tin. Oh it tasted lovely.
>
> *(Cornwall resident, aged sixty)*

Often these sessions of making jams and preserves became events where other members of the community also helped and this is indicative of the women of Cornwall who often came together to make abundant supplies of jam, some having collected the fruit together initially. I can remember the hot summer days when the women would go as a group manned with buckets, clippers, food and hats on all day excursions collecting blackberries to make jam for the family.

Being the productive and self-sufficient housewife in rural Australia was often epitomised through local agricultural shows and competitions conducted by such

groups as The Country Women's Association. These were very important social occasions for the women who were able to show the public the quality of their productivity and prizes were awarded to those with the best produce.

> . . . As I said today when I made the jelly, it wouldn't have passed going into a country show because it had a white top on my jelly, it was something to do with the sugar, it had a sort of white stuff in the sugar. I showed them it was dust. I did put in marmalade jam once, but I didn't get a prize, mine rose, it didn't have the fruit, it's got to have the fruit down in it.
>
> *(Woodbridge housewife, aged seventy eight)*

Jennifer Isaacs writes of the competitive nature between women in making produce:

> For some women, entering shows was a slightly secretive thing they did just for themselves - separate from the responsibilities of caring for family and husband. It was a way of publicly testing against others the skills, arts and tricks of the trade learnt at home.[13]

On Cornwall, this competitiveness between women also existed and events exhibiting the women's produce and cooking talents were regular occasions. Various individuals were well known for their talents in specific areas as one resident recalls:

> Yes, well they had a meeting and they said well I'll take the produce stall, you can have the fancy work stall, Mrs Dayton will have the sweet stall, she always had the sweet stall. Because she could make the most beautiful sweets. Toffees, caramels, fondants, look she was really marvellous and produce, we used, the men would come the night before and they'd put up these stalls and then we'd decorate them with crepe paper and you'd get a prize for whose ever was the prettiest and Oh. . .
>
> *(Cornwall housewife, aged eighty)*

My interpretation of this time was that it was always best to keep in the background. There were at times many women within a small space weighing fruit and berries, peeling fruit or generally catching up on the local happenings in and around Cornwall. It was an industrious time and I can remember the sickly smell of jam wafting through the house. The most enjoyable part was watching the women apply the covers and put the labels on in between many cups of tea and cake.

The three panels of the jam series collectively represent the process of making jam. The idea of a triptych also recalls religious panels which were organised in three's representing the Holy Trinity. My triptych is a reworking of this idea and is created in reverence to these women, much like an altar piece. The first panel depicts the process of the collection of the fruit, ingredients and the actual weighing of the fruit ready for the cooking process. The second panel portrays the actual process of

cooking and tasting the jam and the third panel represents the final products; the jam being put away on the shelves and in the cupboards. I was most conscious of having these three panels linked together and being read as a narrative and so I employed certain methods within the composition to enable the viewer to read it as such. The most obvious of these is the use of the patterns both in the foreground and in the background. This technique worked on various levels within the images. First, it was used as a means of uniting the panels together through the use of the same pattern in the background. I also purposely used the same tiled floor in the three panels to reinforce this linkage. The figures in the foreground are also patterned and I have compositionally linked them together as a means of unifying the groups. The patterns also work on the psyche giving the viewer the sensation of everything being very busy and industrious which is how I can remember the situation usually was. Another means of uniting the panels together was the use of the cats. The cats are used as a means of mimicking the actions of the women portrayed in the prints and operate on a simpler level. In the first panel, the cat represents the idea of total involvement, the second the tasting, and in the third, the cat is taking a bow as though the process is over.

There is no eye contact between the viewer and the viewed and this is because I wanted the viewer to interpret the situation as being one where all involved were totally engrossed with what was happening immediately around them. The women depicted are not recognisable individuals but rather are representative of the type of women who lived in small rural communities such as Cornwall. The stances of the women depicted in this series are those which are not often portrayed in art generally and this was an issue which I wanted to address within my visual imagery. As my

images are based on reality and not on romanticised fictional characters, I wanted my women to appear as such and the postures of these women having back and side views facing the viewer are meant to reflect everyday life.

'Shelling Peas' once again focuses on women being self-sufficient but the main area on which I was focusing in this image was women and food and household technology. I remember quite vividly the daily ritual of shelling peas for the evening meal, when peas were in season. Quite often, groups of women would gather together to conduct this rather monotonous task which was 'spiced up' by the gossip which they would impart to each other or general chit-chat to pass the time and take their minds off the task at hand. The domestic rituals of the women of Cornwall were governed by a precise time table. For instance, the evening meal was prepared to the exact time almost everyday. This was not an uncommon practice for most housewives of the time, as meals were governed by the time that the man of the house finished work and arrived home. It was a sin to be late with meals.

> They knocked off at half past three, by the time he got home here it would be four, and then you'd have his bath and that would take about half an hour, by the time he got really clean, cause I was one of the lucky ones, I had a big bath and sometimes I had a chip heater, when that burnt out then I would light the copper and carry the water in, but I always had the big bath.

'SHELLING PEAS'
(Photography)

'SHELLING PEAS'

> Usually around half past four of an afternoon, they would cook them a hot breakfast. They'd do steak and fried potatoes, bacon and eggs and potatoes. Breakfast, they would do a cooked tea, if that wasn't finished by five o' clock, you were late, and then about eight, half past, you'd see the frying pan come out and they'd be fried vegetables.
>
> *(Cornwall miner's wife, aged eighty)*

The preparation of food in rural areas was a long and arduous task. There was no means of freezing food for long periods of time and labour saving devices such as refrigerators, freezers and modern electrical ovens were scarce.

Located in the background of "Shelling Peas" I have drawn the image of the washing line which used the props. This image of the wash line relates to household technology and the weekly rituals of domesticity. Doing the household washing was a long and laborious chore which was undertaken every Monday; it was the main day of the week allocated for the family wash.

> Oh yes, Washing Monday. Well you were up bright and early to get your washing on the line, about seven, have it out early, but you always made sure it was all white, you had it in the bluo, startling white, the whiter you could get it the better, the more pleased you were

What happened if it rained on Monday?

> It never rained on Monday, it couldn't rain Monday that was our wash day. Some people used to wash on a Sunday night so they could be first up on the Monday morning to get their washing out, that used to drive the next door neighbour mad because they were out there first. Oh yes, what do you think you talked over the fence about. You'd pull the one to pieces who had a dirty laundry up the topside, her washing wasn't as white as so and so's she couldn't have a bag of clothes, it wasn't done properly, or it was torn clothes on the line, and of course that was a no no, because Thursday was mending day.
>
> *(Woodbridge housewife, aged seventy eight.)*

Laundry facilities for many in rural areas were very basic and the washing machine was for many a luxury which was unaffordable. The wash house as it was known was usually located away from the main home.

> . . we had the copper and then a bench, a long wooden bench, Grandad built beside the copper and the baths hung up on the wall above that so that on wash day you had to get these three big baths down and when you put the water, the stuff out of the copper that went into the first tub but you had to fill them up with cold water. There was one tap hanging up

there on a pipe on the wall and you filled one up and then the next one was the second rinse you had to put it from one tub and scrub them on the washing board in there, then they went to the second tub for another rinse, and then they went into the third one, was what they put the blue in.

(Cornwall resident, aged sixty)

The women of Cornwall did eventually own washing machines but this was not until the late nineteen fifties and for many, the mid nineteen sixties.

Oh that was the great time when you chatted over the fence, and then of course when the first washing machine came on Cornwall, oh dear. Well of course then everybody else had to have one.

(Cornwall miner's wife, aged eighty)

Tuesday for all was ironing day and this again was a task which took many hours to complete.

Tuesday you would clean and iron. Yes, everything was ironed, the sheets were pressed, the towels were pressed, there wasn't one article that come up off the line that wasn't ironed. Ironed on the table, had an old grey blanket with an old piece of sheet over it, there was nothing wasted, everything was recycled. Everything was starched. There was

> a bowl of starch, after you had done the washing it went in the starch. Then you had to dampen down then and roll it up. Roll all that up, if you didn't get your ironing done when it had to be done it would mould the clothes, so you had to once it was dampened down and done. After a certain length of time then you had to iron it, cause otherwise it would mould. So it was a lengthy process.
>
> *(Cornwall housewife, aged sixty)*

Irons were in the main heavy and cumbersome and this added to the arduous and often precarious nature of the task.

> We had a shellite one, oh just terrified me, it would pop and roar (you had to pump it up didn't you) oh . . . scary.
>
> *(Nubeena housewife, aged seventy two)*

The outside toilet also occurs in the print 'Shelling Peas'. Sanitation in rural areas was also much more primitive than urban areas and the methods of sanitation were many and varied. The toilet was always located away from the main home and often it was quite a distance down the back yard and away from everything else. There was no sewage system and one either had a septic system, a 'long drop' or the 'night cart' as it was commonly known. Having great distances to go if one wished to relieve oneself during the night was overcome by means of chamber pots which were kept under the beds and emptied by the wife daily. These were commonly called the 'po'.

> Oh yes, yes. That again was just an accepted part of country life to have the po's under the bed and in our childhood at the farm it would be somebody's task in the morning to go around, they had kerosene tins they used as buckets, and whoever was allotted the task had the two kerosene tins they used as buckets, and whoever was allotted the task had the two kerosene tins, one with hot water and the rag and the other one for the contents and each bedroom had to be visited and each po had to be emptied and then rinsed out with hot water and wiped out and it was just one of the things that was done. Nobody commented about it.
>
> *(Nubeena housewife, aged sixty eight)*

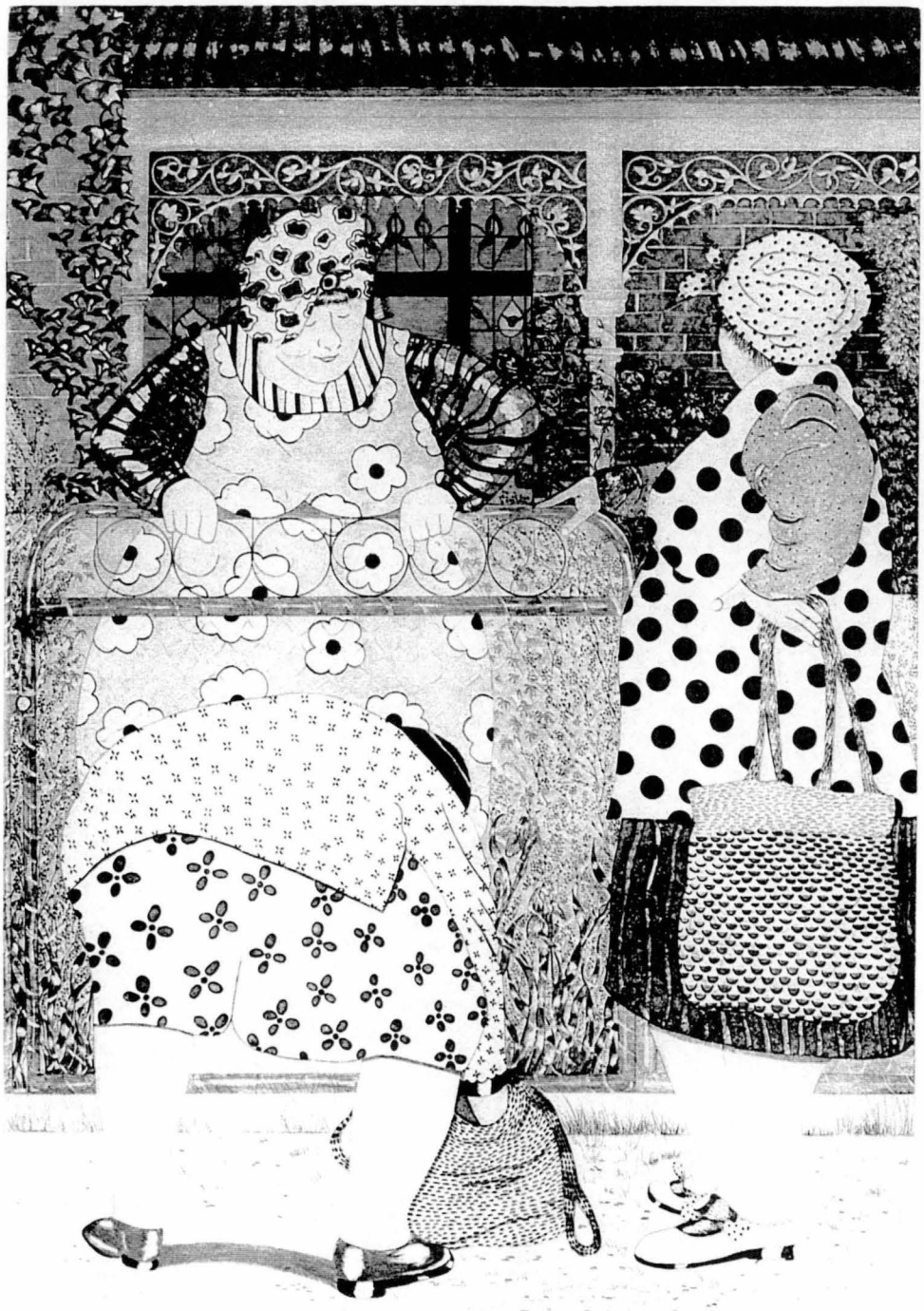
On Cornwall, there were very few who had septic systems, the sewage system was not connected (and still is not) and the 'night cart' would come around once a week to take away the 'waste'. On Cornwall he never came in the evening but always in the middle of the day and I can remember as a child that when he came we would watch him out the kitchen window heaving the heavy cans out to the truck. These days I am told the service is called the 'cleansing service' and the same family is still operating the service some thirty years later. There was on Cornwall a great deal of attention given to the appearance of the outside toilet with many painted in colours matching the main home and many were lined with wall paper and had linoleum on the floors. Phenyl was a cheap and efficient way of controlling the odour and disinfecting the toilet and there was always a bottle of this located in the toilet.

The image 'Over the Garden Gate' relates to communication and social networks amongst women. Also, fashion is addressed in relation to the attire which was worn around the home. On Cornwall, the women were a very close knit group who seemed to know each other's business and 'thrived' on the local gossip. There were no telephones on Cornwall bar the local post office and the mine manager's residence. All communication was literally conveyed by word of mouth. If one wanted to send a message to someone outside of Cornwall this was done by means of telegrams. Telephones were a luxury. One would fill in a telegram slip and then take it to the post office for transmission. Many women would receive their daily 'news' other's by having a daily chit chat over the fence as they went about their business going to and from the local shop or the post office.

> The women? I don't know about the men, but the women seemed to pick one another just the same as they do now. They still pick one another to pieces if they find out something about them, did you hear about so and so. It doesn't change, I remember as a kid listening to Mum and her sister talking about things about Mrs so and so did and what she did, and what he did - and all that sort of thing. And I'd think to myself oh that's exciting.
>
> *(Woodbridge housewife, aged seventy eight)*

Another important means for finding out the local gossip were the many morning and afternoon teas and these were times when neighbours especially got together and

'OVER THE GARDEN GATE' (Photography)



'OVER THE GARDEN GATE'

socialised. Women in the country were very reliant on the support of their neighbours as a means of companionship and information

> Oh yes, we knew the next door neighbour sing out to her if you could see her in the garden, you know sing out and find out what she's doing. If you were having a cup of tea you used to sing out "I'm having a cup of tea would you like one, are you ready for one, that sort of thing. Or if they were going to town, you'd sing out "did you want anything?", so that would have saved them a trip.
>
> *(Woodbridge housewife, aged seventy eight)*

As a child I can remember the continual flow of women in and out the back door (You never went to a person's front door in the country) in both our home and my Grandmother's.

> Well everybody knew what the other person was doing, definitely. No phone, well that would be it, you know. Did you hear about so and so, it would be that, it was never, never harmful, you know it was real over the back fence gossip.
>
> *(Cornwall miner's wife, aged eighty)*

The print 'Hatched, Matched and Dispatched' is closely tied with the social networks that the women of Cornwall had. The daily newspaper was a means of finding out what was generally happening in other parts of the country. One area of the

'HATCHED, MATCHED AND DISPATCHED'

(PHOTOGRAPHY)

'HATCHED, MATCHED AND DISPATCHED'

newspaper which **always** seemed to create the most interest was the births, deaths and marriages columns. These were keenly scanned and savoured with much delight and when a death occurred which related to someone within the Cornwall community there was much ado and a large number of the community would attend the funeral. The community would band together to give comfort to the family and help them over this time of grieving.

> Well all his mates from the mine came and came in and you know they talked about him and everything and you know they kept coming from, he died on a Tuesday, he was buried on a Thursday, but the Tuesday and the Wednesday, there was someone coming and going all the time. Oh the ladies would always bring a cake of some sort. To help you feed. The butcher sent down a piece of meat for me to cook. At the funeral well the church was full and the pallbearers were all his old mates, and everything you know.
>
> *(Cornwall miner's wife, aged eighty)*

There was no cemetery on Cornwall and all were buried at the cemetery outside of St Marys. There were many deaths as a result of the mine and many of the women on Cornwall were widowed as a result of mine accidents or from the men contracting black lung which came from the coal dust.

Going to the cemetery was part and parcel of the routine on Cornwall and I remember going to the cemetery with the family to place flowers on graves and clean

the area around the graves on a regular basis. This in earlier times was often once a fortnight. Buckets of flowers would be taken and hours were spent in the cemetery. Often you would meet relatives at the cemetery doing the same thing

> Oh, yes we would have to pick the flowers and put them in a bucket of water in the morning. Nanna and mum would pick all these flowers, but you always had to have the roast dinner on a Sunday, so you had to do all this in between times and then there was a big bottle of water, because there wasn't any water at the cemetery and then you'd go up there and do all the family graves, put all the fresh flowers on and the rabbits would eat them the next day, but you'd put all the flowers on.
>
> *(Cornwall Housewife, aged sixty)*

Marriages were community based events on Cornwall and the lead up to these consisted of the kitchen teas and then the eventual ceremony itself. Kitchen teas were generally held in the Cornwall hall and all the community attended these including the men. In later times, they were held in people's homes as the population on Cornwall declined. I myself attended some of these which were occasions where food was in abundance, many games were played and much was made over the bride-to-be.

> . . . they'd dance and they'd have games and then you had to open all the gifts up on the stage. It was a community affair, I got 500 tea towels.

(Cornwall housewife, aged sixty)

Marriages were also important events on Cornwall and many who weren't actually invited guests were usually a part of the group who worked in the supper rooms and served the guests.

> Yes, invite . . . but I know there would be ladies that would work in the supper room for weddings and all the tables and trestles would all be put up and they were all white cloths put on those and it was nearly all, there was none of this buffet it was all sit down, knife and fork so they the ladies of the town, cooked, cooked, cooked and cooked didn't they?
>
> *(Cornwall housewife, aged seventy two)*

The majority of the Cornwall population would go to the church and stand outside to see the bride and groom enter and leave the church and throw confetti after the service. There were two churches on Cornwall, the Anglican church and the Salvation Army. Mother's Union was directly linked to the Anglican church and was well supported by the women of Cornwall. It is the oldest branch of Mother's Union in Australia having started in the district in 1892.

> Well, it is a group of women, although men are now being admitted, who are very committed to family, to family life, anything to do with the family, we're not great money raising, we're not like a guild who was like a working group in the

church, we're not like that, we do more with giving practical help, with praying for them, trying to help them spiritually, as well as giving them our companionship, our love.

(Cornwall miner's wife, aged eighty)

Associated with the Salvation Army was 'Home League' which was held once a week on a Wednesday evening in the supper room of the Salvation Army Hall. I attended one of these meetings with my grandmother and the evening consisted of guessing games, prayers and cups of tea and food. Everyone bought a plate of food along to the evening.

The print entitled 'The Bus Stop' is in reference to transport and fashion. Transport on Cornwall was limited and for many it was either foot leather or you 'hitched' a ride with a friend or neighbour if you could. Many used the bus to go 'to town' which referred to Launceston. In earlier times, the train had taken women to and from Launceston but this mode of transport became extinct in the late nineteen sixties. In my time, the women would catch the bus to Launceston and wait for it along the main road at the bottom of Cornwall hill. If one wanted to go to St Marys which was where one could purchase goods not obtainable at the local store on Cornwall, one would be reliant either on the baker (who would in later times deliver goods once a day to the general store on Cornwall) to give you a ride or the train.

. . . the baker, the one that used to go up and get the bread, he always left at a certain time, well there was always a couple of seats and then there was the shop keeper who used

'THE BUS STOP' (Photography)

'THE BUS STOP'

to have a car, and you'd go and see if you could have a ride with her, that's if you had the babies or something and you couldn't, but usually we would walk down the hill and catch the train, and it was just lovely to catch the train, in those days a camel car.

(Cornwall miner's wife, aged eighty)

If there was no means of getting to St Marys by automobile or train then the women of Cornwall would walk up the train line.

If we wanted anything in St Marys we walked four miles there and four miles back and you didn't think anything of it, it was the way it was and that's what you had to do.

(Cornwall Housewife, aged seventy two)

Fashion is also an important element in 'The Bus Stop'. The women of Cornwall and women in general considered fashion very important and when one went out on special occasions such as to church, an afternoon tea, The Country Women's Association meetings or to Launceston, you had to be appropriately dressed. In order to keep up with the changing fashions of the time, the women would often rely on magazines and mail order catalogues which generally came once a month.

Oh, yes we sent for catalogues. Winns catalogues, came through the mail, everything from shoes onwards and there was Rockmans. Rockmans catalogue came and you could

chose something from that in your size and it was sent COD wasn't it?

(Cornwall housewife, aged sixty)

When it came to fashion on Cornwall, there was competition amongst the women to see who would have the best dress, especially when it came to the balls which were held in the hall. Great pains would be taken to have a new dress; something the other women would be able to admire.

Oh, we'd always be dressed up.

Everybody sort of checking out what each other's got on ?

Oh Yeah. We'd have about 4 (balls) a year, and you didn't have a new dress everytime, but you'd try and make one just a little bit different every time, you'd try to do something different to it.

(Cornwall miner's wife, aged eighty)

Fashion was also important in regard to Sunday attire and especially when one attended church.

My word, you had your clothes for Sunday. Oh if someone came with something new, they'd look them up and down and everything to make sure you know, as to what it was like.

(Cornwall miner's wife, aged eighty)

> Yes, we would go to church and Aunty Em would sit there and say, look at her hat, look at that hat.
>
> *(Cornwall housewife, aged seventy two)*

My grandmother was a widow at thirty three and to 'make ends meet' she sewed for many of the community and made many outfits for the women of Cornwall based on pictures taken from the latest women's magazines. This was her only means of income at one stage as there was no widow's pension available to women in this period.

> I'd make their clothes. I'd get 3/6 or 4/- for a big dress. I sewed all day and half the night, I never got a foot machine until I was married, I did it all on on the old hand machine.
>
> *(Cornwall housewife, aged eighty seven)*

'The Apple Orchard' is based on my memories of picking fruit on Cornwall and the times when my grandmother recalled how she in her later years would go apple picking and work in the apple sheds packing apples in the Huon Valley as a means of 'making ends meet'. She enjoyed these times immensely and spoke of them quite often and of the good friends she had made. Without this source of income, life would have been very basic and luxuries few. Many women from rural areas engaged in picking apples as a means of supplementing their income and thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the network of friendships that developed from this seasonal work.

'THE APPLE ORCHARD' (Photography)

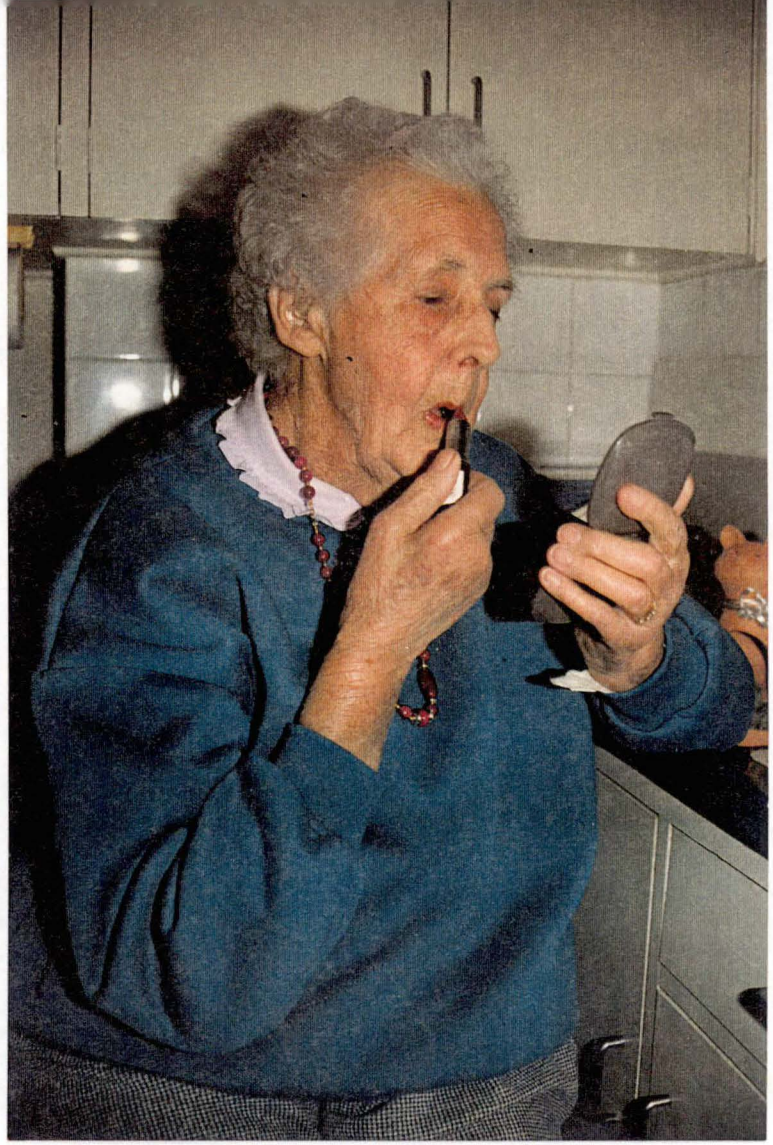
'THE APPLE ORCHARD'

> Great social thing this working in the shed. I did it for one season. Alison and I had this convenient arrangement, we'd manage to dovetail pregnancies, so she was pregnant I worked, and then if I was pregnant she worked and um, but oh yes, it got too much with the home of course and there was always fun and games going on in the apple packing sheds and ah, there'd be breaks for morning tea and breaks for lunch and breaks for afternoon tea.
>
> *(Nubeena housewife, aged seventy two)*

There were also in later times, many areas on Cornwall where you could see fruit trees in vacant paddocks where once there had been homes, and these would be picked to make preserves for the winter months. There were always 'favourite' trees which supposedly yielded the best fruit and these would be 'watched' ready for picking when the fruit was ripe. On Cornwall, these trees were mainly apple trees and pear trees and even today amongst the scrub you can find fruit trees from past times still bearing fruit. My grandmother was always looking for fruit in the summer months to preserve for the winter. This process was like a ritual and even when my Grandmother left Cornwall in her later years and moved to the city, she would still go and take fruit from the trees over people's fences in different areas every year and would mark the bottles with the name of the street from where the fruit had been 'thieved' and if this turned out to be a 'good batch' then it would be visited the following year.

With the image 'The Apple Orchard', there is the notion of apple picking being a repetitive activity and therefore I have drawn the women as though they are in some ways 'robotic' in their motions and the entire image is like a conveyer belt or a production line with the figures connected to each other. By using this method, the composition becomes more 'flowing' in movement. At the same time, the activity was not monotonous since it provided the women with an opportunity to mingle together and catch up on the latest news. I wanted this to be apparent within the print and I have used the patterns and the stance of the characters to convey this idea to the viewer.

'Avon Calling' is based on my memories of watching my Mother, my Grandmother and a few of the neighbours gather together to look at and sample the new range of makeup and accessories which were available. The Avon lady came once a month with a new range of products and samples for the women to select from and the orders placed from the last visit would also be delivered. I remember there were always a lot of oohs and ahs when she produced the 'latest' items and the samples of these to be tried. The Avon lady would leave many tiny lipstick samples which were in white tubes and she always carried a large bag which was her Avon kit. The Avon lady was a cousin from St Marys so she would bring with her all the news and again this was an occasion where women could be together and purchase wares for themselves rather than for the home. They would sit around the kitchen table in their aprons and everyday attire drinking cups of tea and enjoying each other's company. The Avon lady was always dressed in her best attire when she came calling .



'AVON CALLING' (Photography)

'AVON CALLING' (Photography)

'AVON CALLING'

> Well you never ever knew when she was going to call. She was my cousin but then you were related to everyone in the St Marys district or almost everyone and she was my cousin's girl Jeanette, Jeanette Chapman and she would just come and it was more like a visit than anything, bring things to sell and often my neighbour would come over, Elma, and we'd catch up on all the St Marys spicy news items and the Cornwall ones and we'd pass it all on and sometimes there would be others there as well, we usually had other people there having cups of coffee. She would have her little bag with all her samples and her things in it and we would just have a look at those.
>
> *(Cornwall resident, aged sixty)*

The Avon lady wasn't the only person who would visit Cornwall selling wares in a door to door fashion. Many salesmen or 'hawkers' as they were known, would visit Cornwall selling items such as brooms and saucepans for example. This was a popular way of buying items in earlier times due to the lack of transport in rural areas and for some, the distance from general stores made this a convenient practice. Some who came selling goods door to door on Cornwall were based in Launceston and Hobart so for the women of Cornwall these were exciting events when these people came to call. Door to door salesman included the Coogans Man who sold mats and the Rawlings man who sold medicinal goods.

I can remember back in the war days, that would be in the early forties and around that time we used to have two hawkers come round. Yorky Smith he sold pegs and his friend Boney had the old rags and things like that, they were like old tramps with sack bags on the back, awful looking old men terrible. My mother told me if I was bad she'd give me to Yorky Smith. I was frightened to death of him. He had those eyes with the bags hanging down, you know all red and he would have the willow pegs. I suppose the willow pegs were about four inches long with a band of tin around the top, they were called dolly pegs. Oh yes, then the Coogans man would come around with a sort of van, had all these mats and things in there and being the days of the lino on the floors we had mats everywhere and of course at spring cleaning time the ladies of Cornwall and other districts would all have a new mat.

(Cornwall resident, aged sixty)

The visual image of Avon Calling is the only print which was made on copper. I deliberately made the composition one which was interlinked and again the patterns were an important factor in tying the three women together. The viewer is drawn into the picture by the closeness of the characters so that one feels they are also a part of the action although eye contact is avoided giving the viewer the idea that the women are quite at ease with what they are doing and that one is welcome to be a part of this

tableau. Having the women in the kitchen dressed in their everyday attire with kitchen utensils in the background and their hair in scarves and curlers was quite common from what I recall. I wanted to impart to the viewer the sense of this being their world and that they were for the most quite happy with their surroundings and their life style. The models for this image enjoyed posing for this and I wanted this conveyed to the viewer also as this again parallels the attitude of the women when the Avon lady came calling.

4) Influences of Other Artists on my Work

Having discussed the imagery and relevant historical documentation pertaining to my research of this sub-culture I now want to focus on those artists who have influenced, in some way, the imagery which I have produced. There are four artists who have had an influence on my work for varying reasons and these are Stanley Spencer, Fernando Botero, Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Rupert Bunny.

Stanley Spencer is perhaps the most significant of the artists I have mentioned as his imagery deals with memory and is based around the sub-culture of a small English village called Cookham where he lived for many years. His images 'speak' of his adoration for this community and through his work we, the viewers, are given an insight into his people and the way he felt about them.

Duncan Robinson writes of Stanley Spencer:

> But for Stanley Spencer, Cookham was ever a 'holy suburb of Heaven,' in which the memories of childhood merged with the visions of youth and fantasies of maturity to inspire an artistic re-creation of the earthly paradise. Spencer's attachment to Cookham was as intense as Samuel Palmer's to Shoreham, and it was sustained to the end of his life.[14]

Stanley Spencer's imagery is based on every day life and his images convey a 'love' of life and human nature. His early works pertain to biblical references but after the First World War and his experiences, the work changed and the connotations of

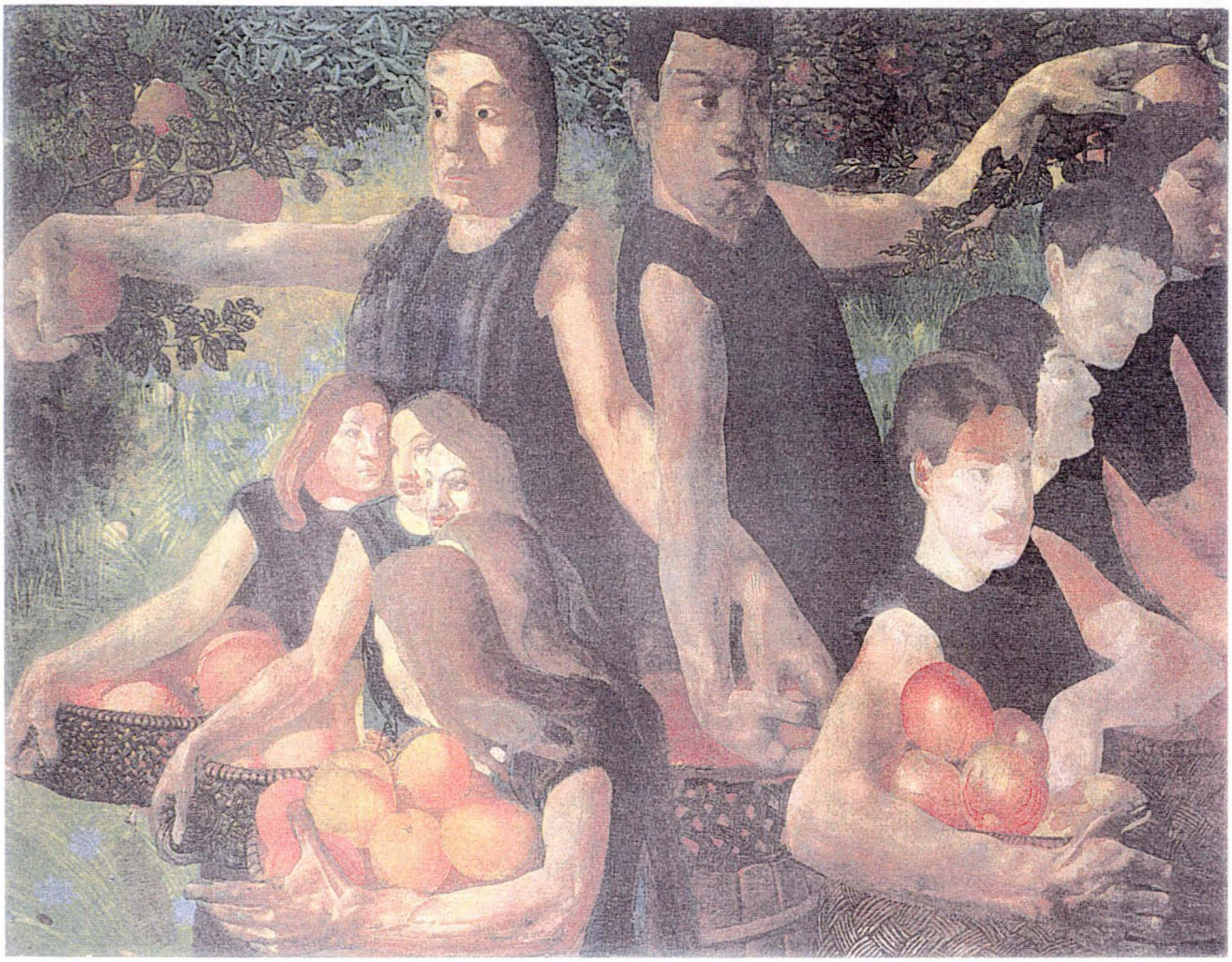
'holy' images of the community was not as prominent. It is with these later works generally (1930s onwards)with which I find parallels with my own images. The scenes of everyday life which he depicted such as 'Workman in the House', 'The Dustman or the Lovers', 'Neighbours' and 'The Apple Gatherers' have the feeling of mayhem which is created by the use of figures interlinked in such a manner that they 'hug' the perimeters of the image in most instances. Another aspect of his work which has similarities to that of mine is the detail with which he imbues the work. At times the detail is so overwhelming it takes on the appearance of patterns which help to unite the work and give it a 'busy' feeling so that the eye is continually roaming and searching the visual image.

> Consequently he groups his figures in a decorative manner, disregards perspective and scale, emphasises the hands by enlarging them, and stresses the all-over decorative unity of the canvas.[15]

All of his characters convey the sense of everyday happenings and we, the viewers, are given an insight into the 'ordinary life' of Cookham through Spencer's interpretation of that period.

Antony Gormley quotes Spencer and his attitude to his work and life:

> To me there are two joys: the joys of innocence and religiousness and the joys of change and sexual experience



Stanley Spencer
'The Apple Gatherers'
1912

Stanley Spencer
'The Dustman or The Lovers'
1934

Stanley Spencer
'Workmen in the House'
1935

> and while these selves seem unrelated and irreconcilable still I am convinced of their ultimate union. [16]

Gormley says of Spencer :

> The joys appear in all his work, in his early vision as well as in his later one, and the union of the spirit and the body was his life-long obsession. Cookham and its inhabitants provided Spencer's early vision. His art was the expression of a direct experience of the presence of God in place and person. Cookham was the 'Village in Heaven'; in it lay the foundation of Spencer's faith in life and himself.[17]

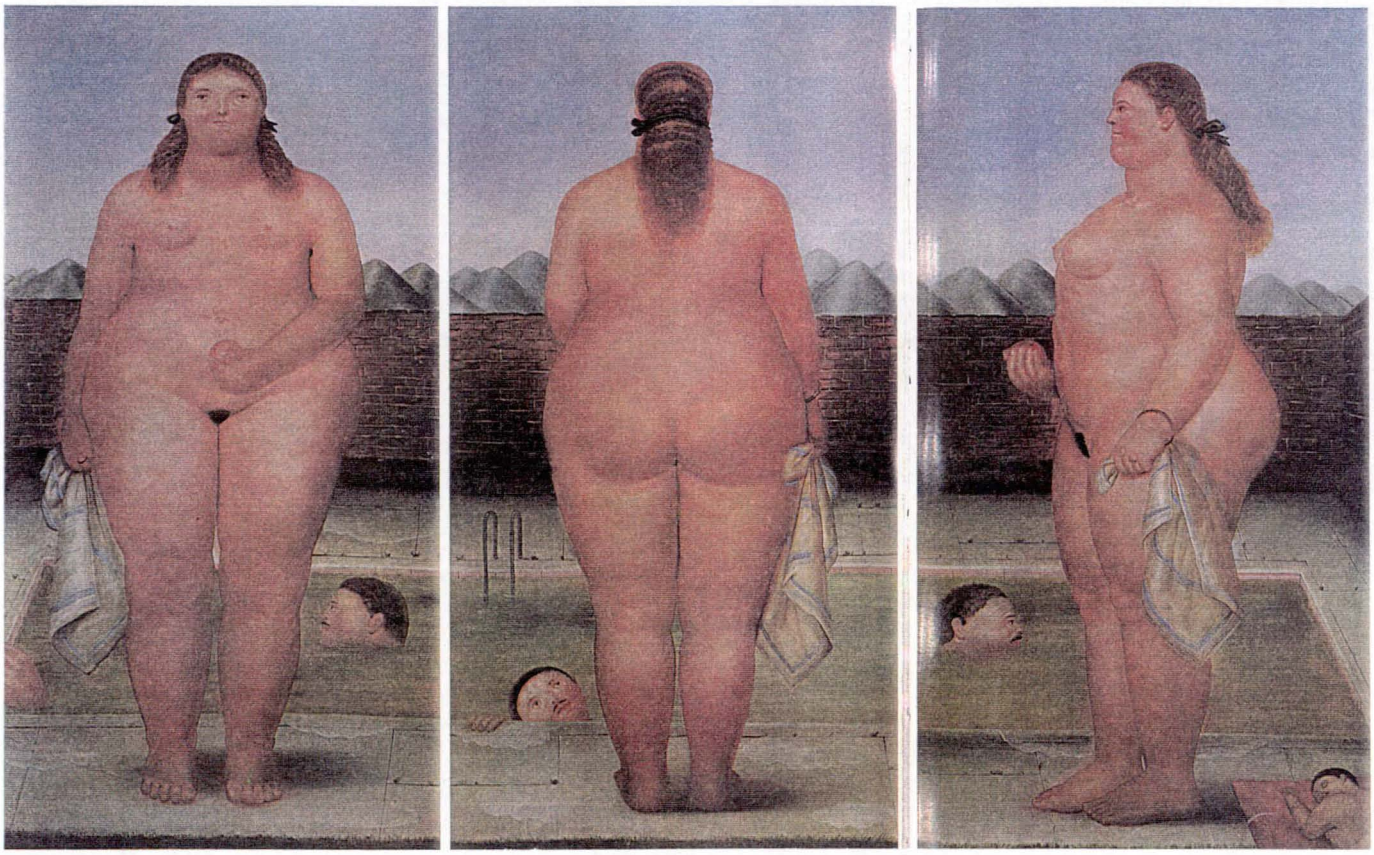
Fernando Botero is another artist whose subject matter and figurative work is in some respects similar to my own imagery. Botero's imagery is based on his South American heritage and he creates images which epitomise his country of origin, Columbia, and his own experiences of growing up in this environment. His images are those of the everyday people and include images such as bullfights, bordello scenes, portraits and landscapes. His work has a humorous aspect to it and the images take on the appearance of a 'homage' to certain individuals and events.

His figures are always exaggerated in shape throughout his work and this distinctive style brings an 'individualism' to the work and it becomes easily identifiable as that of Botero's. This is perhaps the most important aspect of Botero's work which I find has similarities to that of my own. Werner Spies writes of this in Botero's imagery:

> Reviewing the broad spectrum of figures and objects in Botero's work, one cannot help but conclude that his constant exaggeration robs exaggeration of its significance, that the continual repetition of a single formal principle makes exaggeration seem normal. We soon control our desire to laugh, because, we find upon closer scrutiny, the note of caricature in the imagery is only one among many. Botero's deformation is persistent and continually in evidence, and by this very fact it becomes the prime regulatory factor governing all his imagery. Unchanging distortion is raised to a canon, and one that we are gradually compelled to accept: any type of presence other than the rotund soon becomes unimaginable. In this way the plump, stocky figures and objects that Botero depicts are gradually divested of the narrative character traditionally associated with fat, pyknic figures in art.[18]

Botero himself has defended his use of 'exaggerated forms' by saying in reply to the question: "*Why do you paint fat figures?*"

> . . . I don't. They look rather slim to me. My subject matter is sometimes satirical, but these 'puffed-up' personalities are being 'puffed' to give them sensuality. In art as long as you have ideas and think, you are bound to deform nature. Art is



Fernando Botero
'Bathers'
1975

Fernando Botero
'La Toilette'
1980

> deformation. There are no works of art that are truly 'realistic'. [19]

Another aspect of Botero's work which I have myself employed in my own imagery is the use of the triptych. Botero used this device in his triptych titled 'Bathers', 1975. He has successfully created a narrative which 'leads' the viewer through the three panels using repetitive figures and 'background'. I have also sought to employ these devices in the triptych 'Jam' which is a narrative relating to the process of making jam.

Crowded composition and the naturalistic 'stance' of my figures to convey to the viewer my concepts of a certain event or of certain individuals who were part of everyday life on Cornwall is an important element in my work and this perhaps is the most common similarity I find between my work and that of Pieter Bruegel. Bruegel, a Flemish artist of the sixteenth century, documented everyday life and the events which were a part of the existence of the Flemish people.

> Bruegel's great achievement was to observe minutely the common people and to paint a scrupulously faithful picture of them, feature by feature. We might even say that he devoted his whole lifework to the scoundrels and boorish peasants whom medieval art banished to the margins of illuminated manuscripts or to obscure corners of the churches.[20]

Pieter Bruegel *'Wedding Dance in the Open Air'* *c.1566*

Pieter Bruegal *'The Peasant Dance'* c 1568

Bruegel's paintings are very crowded in composition as is evident in 'Wedding Dance in the Open Air' 1566. Bruegel's canvases are full of people engaged in various activities which gives the viewer the feeling of patterns which in turn create a liveliness which encompasses the whole image. Bruegel quite often in his works does not have the characters depicted in his paintings confronting the viewer and we become spectators looking in on an event in which we are not included. Also, in Bruegel's work, the stance of the figures is often ungainly - a feature also evident in my prints.

Another ploy which Bruegel used and which I have also employed is the use of hats to obscure particular individuals, as for example, my print 'The Apple Orchard'. This device I have used as a means of bringing generalities to the work rather than portraying individuals. The figure, its clothing and stance become the mode of identification for the viewer. If I don't use hats as a device for obscuring facial features, often I will have the eyes which are supposedly 'the window to our soul' closed or turned away from the viewer. Cavendish writes of Bruegel:

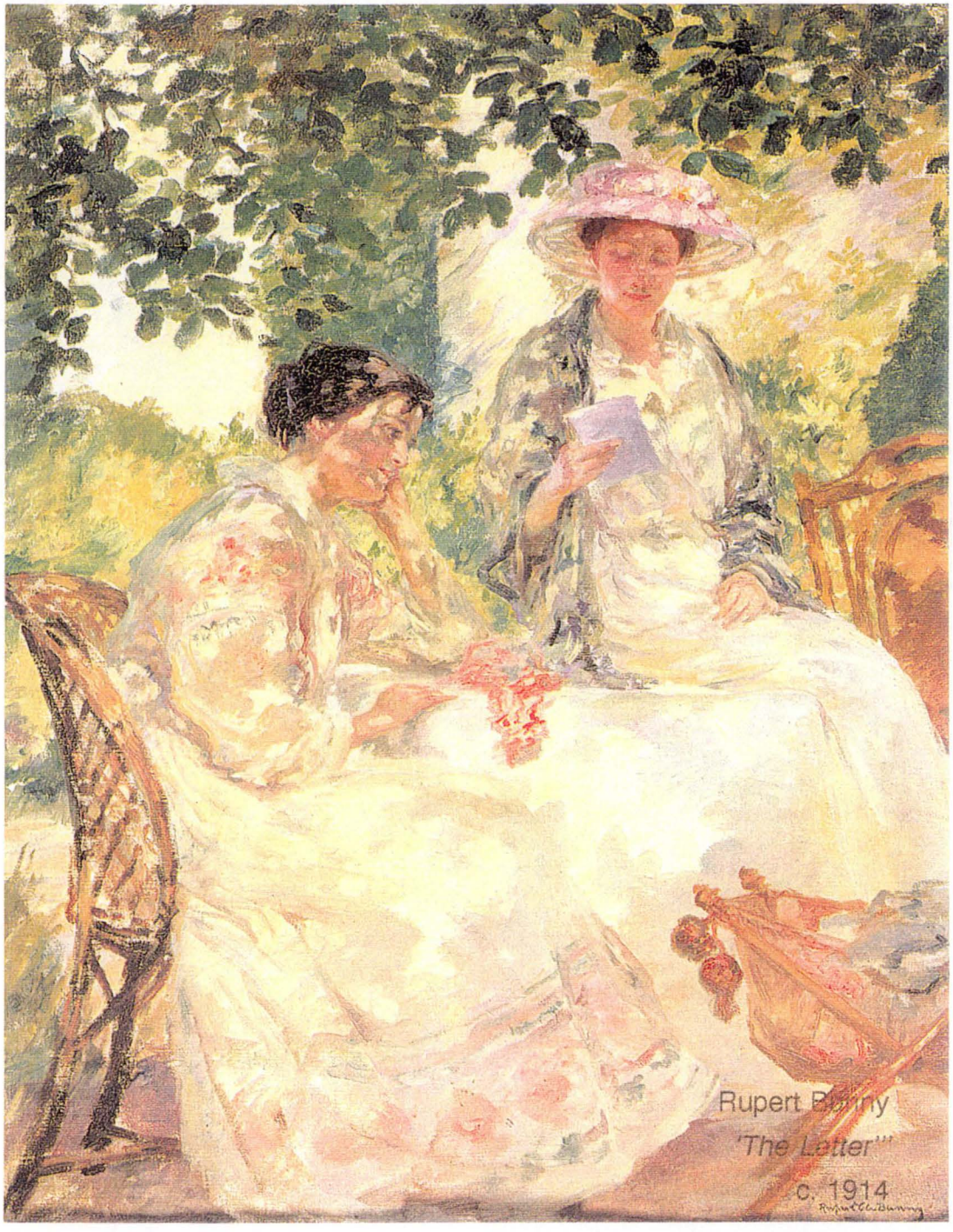
> Bruegel was far more concerned with characterising human types than with portraying particular individuals. He often used hats and head-dresses to obscure faces, revealing character through the figure as a whole.[21]

The use of light within my images has been a problem which I have tried to address in this series of prints, especially in the 'outdoor' images and I have used the works of Rupert Bunny as a resource. Rupert Bunny was able to use light as a theatrical prop

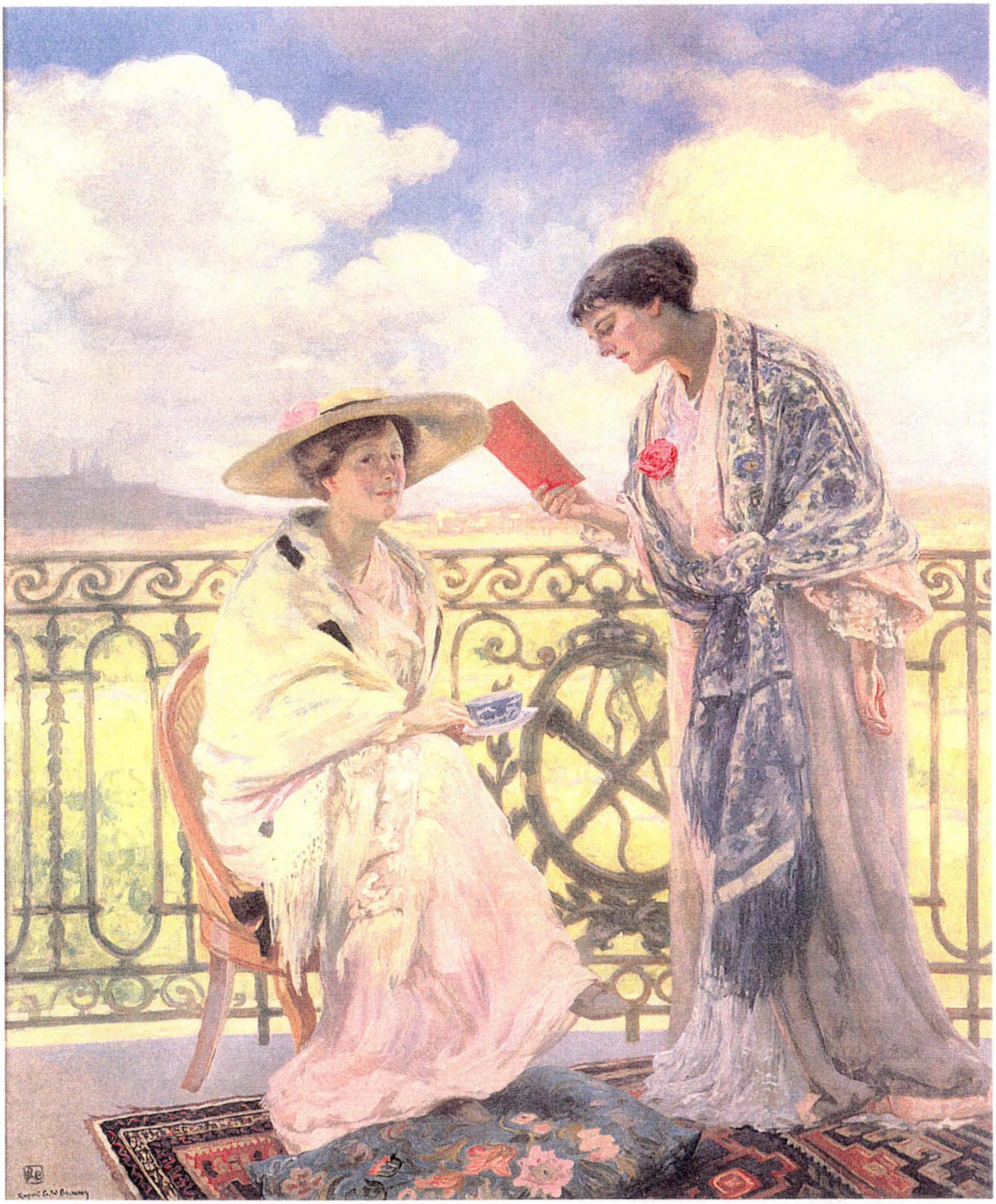
to give atmosphere to his work and to set the tone of the work Images such as 'The Letter' 1914, 'On the Balcony, 1913, 'Summer Time', 1910 and 'A Summer Morning', 1908 are good examples of this. Bunny used a dappled light which filters through the background and across certain areas of the figures which give a softness and a serenity to the entire visual image. Also, his use of women as subject matter in the main and his depiction of everyday events which are a visual documentation of a certain period in time have similarities with my work and the intentions of the imagery.

The gestures of figures in his paintings are so frequently an integral part of the stories that we might assume he intended the domestic awkwardness of this picture. If nothing else, the poses, like the inclusion of a street address in the title, declare that he was painting a subject from everyday modern life.

> The impression conveyed is of naturalness and sunny serenity, and one understands why critics, both in Australia and in Paris- despite evidence of exaggerated posing and lavish costuming- praised Bunny's paintings of this time for the qualities of natural, unforced intimacy. [22]

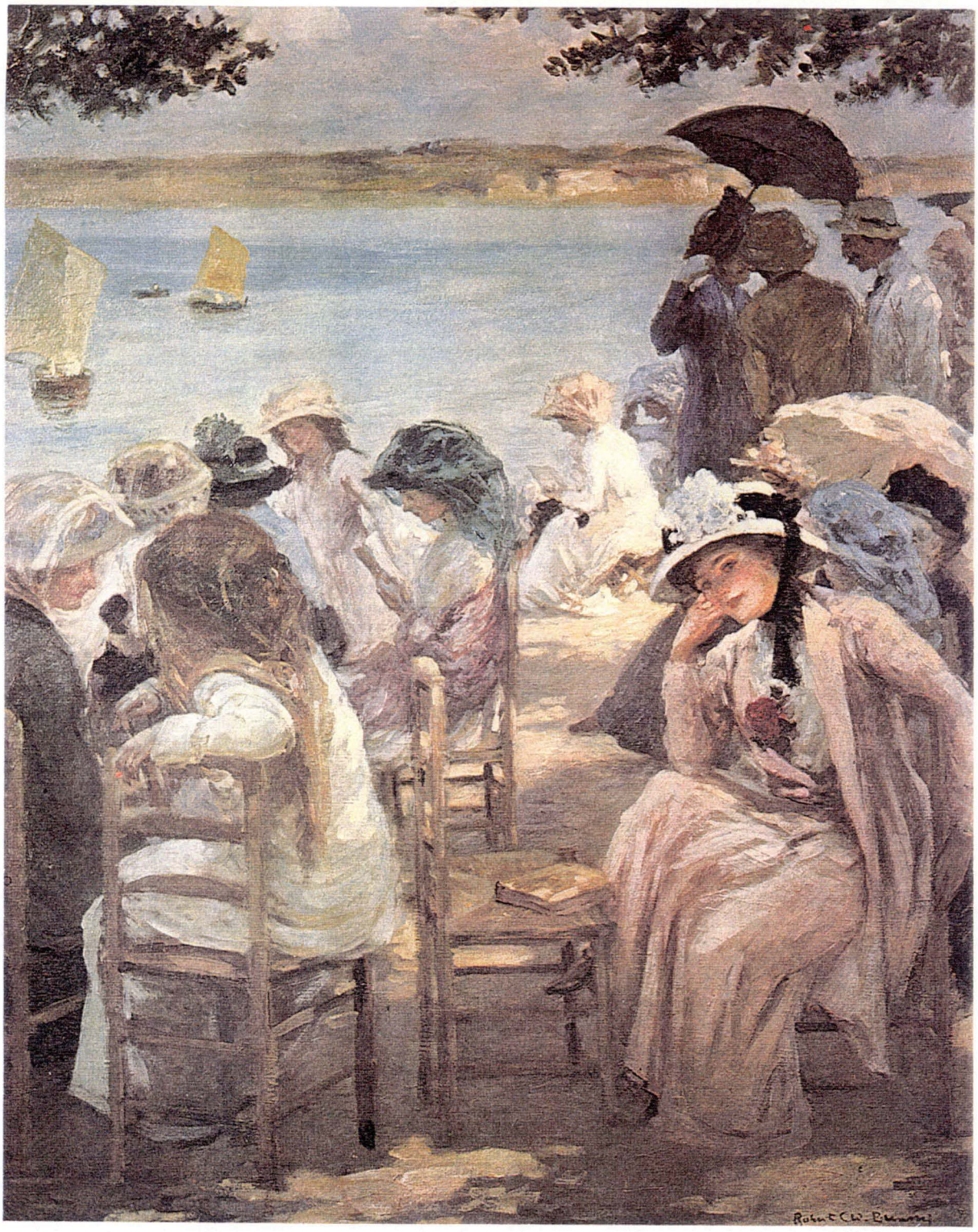


Rupert Bunny
'The Letter'
c.1914



Rupert Bunny
'On the Balcony'
c.1913

Rupert Bunny
'A Summer Morning'
c.1908



Rupert Bunny
'Summer Time'
c.1910

5) Conclusions

How my research through both oral histories and visual imagery, had deepened my understanding of the sub-culture of the women on Cornwall.

This research which has dealt not only with my own small community but with rural women who have similar lives to those of the Cornwall women has broadened my understanding of their attitudes and the ideologies of domesticity which were part and parcel of the period from the early 1930s to the end of the 1960s.

A factor which became quite evident in researching this topic and one which I was able to draw conclusions from was the lack of attention given to the recording of women's social history in any form in Australia pre 1970s and therefore the use of oral histories for my research on 'Women and Domesticity' focusing on the sub-culture of rural women in Australia has proven to be crucial to me. Australian literature pre 1970s has not recorded women's social history in any great detail, particularly the lives of rural women Historians of this period tended to focus on the 'Anglo-Australian male' of the rural areas who was depicted as the hero of the outback, fighting the elements and enduring hard times whereas the role of the woman in the same situation was ignored. While since the 1960s, there has been more research into women's social history, the focus has tended to be on the changing roles of urban women, generalising from their experience without giving due weight to the life situations of rural women. I have sought to address this oversight through both oral histories and the visual images, emphasising those issues which were distinctive of the lives of rural women. Using oral histories as the main reference for my research on this topic, I was able to gain a more personal insight into the lives of women and

the history of that time from their own experiences. Their recollections became a tangible record of a certain period in Australian history legitimised by women who have experienced this time and not an 'overview' of people's lives put forward by historians basing their findings on quantitative rather than qualitative data and dare I say often a biased male gendered opinion. My use of oral histories was also crucial for my visual imagery becoming a catalyst for my own memories of this period and although they have not been translated into visuals directly they are nevertheless an important inspiration for my imagery. Through the use of both memory and oral histories I was able to produce a series of images which are tableaux of the Cornwall community and its culture from my point of view. Looking back at the visual record of women's social history of this period also, it was evident that it was minimal consisting mostly of 'happy snaps' from family albums. Photography relating to women and domesticity in this period was hard to locate and usually dealt with urban women, fashion and high society. While advertisements located in magazines of this time did focus on the role of the woman and her role as mother and housekeeper, these images were highly idealised images of domesticity consisting of exaggerated cameos of urban women not based on reality. I therefore constructed my own photographic tableaux which I felt were indicative of women's experience of domesticity in this period and these formed the basis of my prints.

I concluded that rural women in general were 'content' to encapsulate themselves within the home environment as the centre of the family unit, home maker and budget conscious keeper of the limited coffers while their husbands in most cases were the 'breadwinner's' and absolute heads of the house. Women living in rural mining towns tended to be members of a tight-knit community where traditional ideologies of the

woman's role as being primarily in the home were strongly entrenched. Australian history has shown that this particular ideology was reinforced in Australian society during The Great Depression of the 1930s and the post Second World War period. Governments of the day were also instrumental in 'idealising' the domestic role of women.

The women of Cornwall and rural women in general were basically socially conditioned by the environment in which they existed and accepted their lot since they were unaware of other alternatives. They, as women, did as their mothers before them had done; left school early (Grade 6) worked in the family home learning domestic skills or took employment as domestic help or shop assistants, married and had children and cared for the home and the family. Theirs was a preplanned destiny with little room for change. While, during this era (1930s to 1960s) there were marked changes in the roles, values and expectations of city women, in the country, things changed much more slowly. While from the perspective of urban dwellers it might seem that these communities could be quite claustrophobic and restrictive, the country women themselves did not see their lives in this manner .

Although the women whose lives I researched are now living in a 'throw away society' which has technology far more advanced than theirs was in the earlier part of the century and they now have access to supermarkets and stores seven days a week, for them, ***nothing*** has really changed in the way they run their homes, their attitudes to life, their social networks, fashion or their food preparations. I would also argue that for many of the women who lived through The Great Depression and the Second World War, these events had a great impact on the way they lived with many being

influenced even today by the memories of those times when the household became very budget conscious, self sufficiency was a must and women became thrifty and recycled anything of value.

Even today these women are unable to 'lash out' and be extravagant - theirs was and continues to be a world of basic necessities.

While these women today have to a certain extent acquired the 'labour-saving' appliances adopted much earlier by urban women, most continue to be circumspect about their virtues. I found that many of my participants did not have homes equipped with the latest home appliances but tended to have just what was needed and not that which was superfluous to their needs. They in many cases continue to keep house using many of the techniques they would have employed some thirty to sixty years ago such as scrubbing floors on hand and knees, polishing floors and hand washing items rather than using a washing machine to save time and labour. Most would not consider using gadgetry to beat a cake mix such as an electric beater but tend to do this by hand using a fork even though this takes twice as long to complete.

Lack of household technology during the period from the 1930s-1960s had meant that the time spent in the home on domestic chores was quite lengthy and it was one of the main reasons why these women were tied to the home for so much of the week.

In the period of the 1930s to the end of the 1960s it was part and parcel of the rural housewife to be budget conscious and therefore the household was run on a very

tight budget which meant that the housewife had to be as self sufficient as possible and buying groceries from a store was restricted and for certain items frowned upon. Another reason for their need to be self sufficient was that stores were in some cases many miles from the family home and not readily accessible to the housewife and therefore one had to have their own supplies on hand or supplement the diet with alternatives. Many had vegetable gardens and fowls and were able to buy milk locally. The majority of the women interviewed still make their own jam, preserve fruit and vegetables for the winter months, make all their own cakes and biscuits and for some, their own bread. Being 'known' for one's cooking was a great attribute and competition between the women was not uncommon. This still continues today for many in rural areas and especially in the older generations. In earlier times, women would always have their tins full of cakes and biscuits for the family, lunches and the women who would call. It was unheard of to have empty cake tins and most women cooked two and three times a week to keep the tins full. Another aspect of their daily lives which has not changed is the necessary hot meal once a day. This has to consist of 'three veg and meat' plus a 'sweet' as it is commonly called. Even today many would not entertain the idea of take-away food but consider the 'home cooked meal' the only meal worth having.

From my interviews with various women and women's groups I deduced that the care of the home was of great importance for these women and much pride was taken in the cleaning, decorating and maintenance of the home. A clean home which was well kept and contained items such as good china, (for the guests), curtains, hand made doylies, tea cloths and items of this nature reflected the creativity and general character of the occupant. As these women did not work the home was their social

arena - the place where they socialised - they felt the necessity to keep the home in a state of being 'spic and span'. This ideology has not changed and for many of these women who are now aged sixty and above this trend continues today with the house being clean and tidy and visits by neighbours and guests entailing the teapot, the good china, hand sewn doylies and the best supper cloth.

The social networks which these particular women enjoyed during the 1930s to the end of the 1960s based around the home and various clubs still exist today . The obvious difference today with younger women's social networks as compared to these older generations is that the social arena for many women today is in the work place whereas for those studied in the designated period in my research, the home was the social arena. I found that many of these women continue to enjoy social gatherings within their homes. Women's clubs such as The Country Women's Association still enjoy the patronage of the older women who meet on a regular basis. Support for associations such as The Country Women's Association are on the decline with membership decreasing at an alarming rate and the average age of a member now seventy years old. While television has now entered the homes of these women, the television for most is only viewed at certain times, is turned off if visitors arrive and they blame it for the downfall of society and the lack of communication between 'young people' of today.

Most also continue to knit their own jumpers and cardigans as they have for most of their lives with garments made from difficult patterns being appreciated by those around them. Sewing of garments is still part and parcel of their lives with one participant making suits for herself at the tender age of eighty five. I felt that this

'habit' of sewing and knitting was a part of their conditioning from which they could not separate themselves. It was part of the ideology of being self sufficient and making ends meet which again would be part of the role of being the budget conscious housewife. They also continue to show a preference for clothing which is hard wearing and long lasting. I observed that most of my participants were knitting or making some sort of needle craft while participating in the oral histories, which harks back to the comment that they felt they had to keep busy knitting or sewing and that they couldn't bear to have idle hands.

This research I feel has made me more conscious of the strengths and weaknesses of these small rural communities. On the one hand, they provided women with a support network, a feeling of community, a sharing of the good and bad times while on the other hand, they limited their horizons and possibilities in life. Through this research I was able to understand why my particular community of women behaved as they did and more importantly I was able to appreciate and admire the labours of these women who existed without the luxuries I enjoy today. It is the sense of community and 'belonging' which these women experienced which continues to draw me to them. I liken them to a community encapsulated in a time warp where change has had no marked effect upon them

I was a part of a small rural community and experienced this community spirit and contentment which embodied my particular community but I realise that this simple existence has its limitations in so far as it provides women with very little choice other than to be housewives and mothers.

END NOTES

1. Residents of Cornwall when referring to Cornwall always say 'on Cornwall' as Cornwall is located on a mountain side rather than saying they live 'in Cornwall'.

2. Camplin U. (1994) p3

3. Saunders K. and Evans R. (1992) p.\xvii

4. Saunders K. and Evans R. ibid pxvii i

5. Aveling M. and Damousi J (1991) p110

6. Summers A. (1994) p442

7. Townsend H. (1988) p101

8. Ibid p101

9. Bosworth M. (1988) p172

10. Townsend H. op.cit p199

11. Finkelstein J. (1991) p1

12. Oscar Wilde quoted in Mellers S. and Elffers J. (1991) p13

13. Isaacs J. (1992) p204

14. Robinson D. (1990) p9

15. Leder C. (1976) p16

16. Gormley A. (1976) p21

17. Gormley A.ibid

18. Spies W. (1992) p10

19 McCabe C. (1979) p10

20. Seidel M. and Marijnissen R. (1971) p27

21. "Bruegel" in Great Artists Part 22, Volume 2. 1985 p683

22. Eagle M. (1991) p101

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LIST OF WORKS

JAM (TRIPTYCH) 1994 - 95
etching , zinc plate
76 cm x 19.5 cm, platemark

HATCHED, MATCHED AND DISPATCHED 1994
etching, zinc plate
19.5 cm x 73 cm, platemark

THE APPLE ORCHARD 1995
etching, zinc plate
19.5 cm x 100 cm, platemark

AVON CALLING 1996
etching, copper plate
19.5 cm x 80 cm, platemark

SHELLING PEAS 1997
etching, zinc plate
78 cm x 19.5 cm, platemark

OVER THE GARDEN GATE 1997
etching, zinc plate
79 cm x 19.5 cm, platemark

THE BUS STOP 1997
etching, zinc plate
19.5 cm x 81 cm, platemark

EXTENSION OF RESEARCH

'PLAYING OUR PART'

EXHIBITION CELEBRATING SIXTY YEARS OF THE COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN TASMANIA.

This exhibition came about as a result of the research I was undertaking - namely, women and domesticity focusing on rural women in Australia.

I had conducted oral histories with certain branches of the Country Women's Association in Tasmania and as a result of this and the fact that it was their sixtieth birthday this year (1996) it was decided that an exhibition marking this should be undertaken and I agreed to curate and co-ordinate this exhibition. The exhibition opens in Hobart on the 11th of October, 1996 at the Bond Store which is part of the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. It travels to Launceston in March 1997 and to Burnie in June/July 1997.

We received a Visions of Australia Grant for this exhibition and it is possible that this exhibition could tour interstate.

The exhibition includes craft made for CWA exhibitions, their contribution to the war effort, their work in the community and photography and text documenting their history of the last sixty years.

A register of past and present members has been undertaken culminating in a catalogue which features photographs and recollections by some of the original members when the CWA first began here in Tasmania.

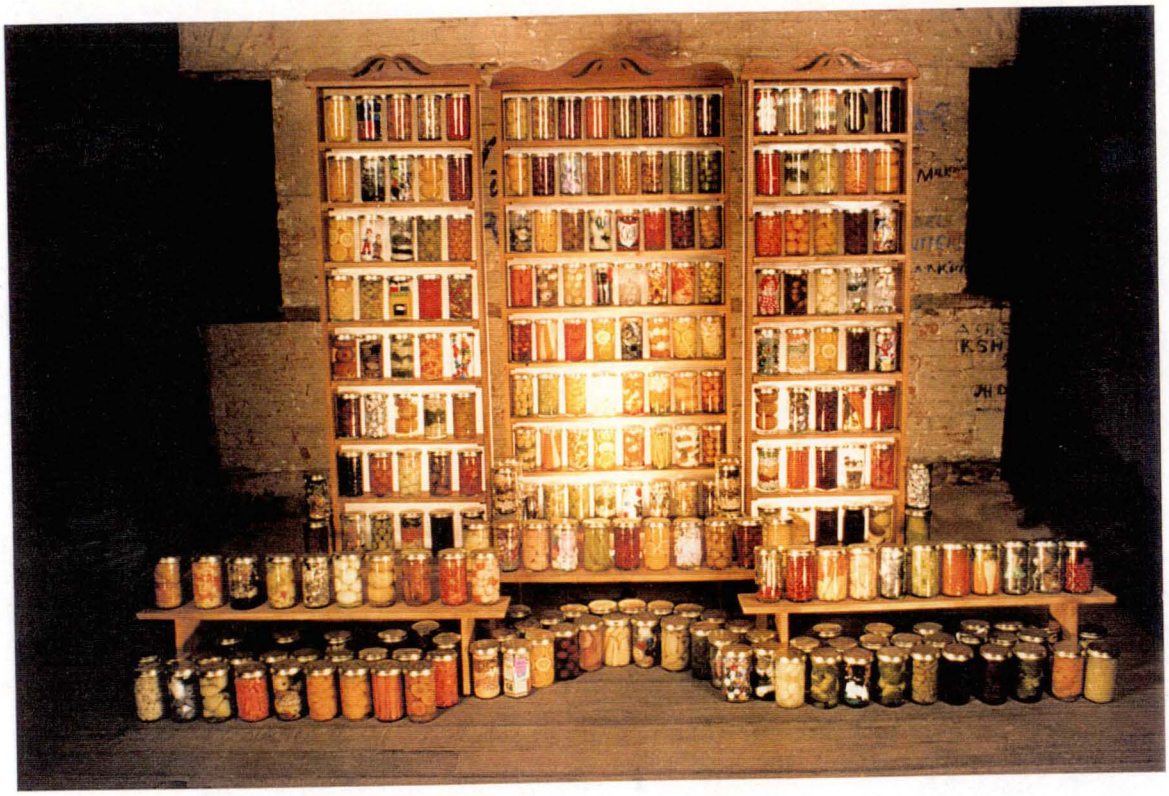
A major feature of the exhibition is the work done by the CWA during the Second World War with members recreating camouflage nets which were used by the forces, also socks, vests etc. Memorabilia from the war period also features in the exhibition.

The state project for the members of the CWA has been 'using a Fowlers Vacola jar', Members have filled this with something that epitomises their area of Tasmania. The jar had to contain fluid so that the backlighting could filter through. The light represents the 'life' of the Country Women's Association in Tasmania.

Researching and curating this exhibition has further enhanced my research on the subject of 'women and domesticity' and has reinforced my findings on the topics outlined in my thesis.

'PLAYING OUR PART' - SIXTY YEARS OF THE COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION IN TASMANIA

VISUAL DOCUMENTATION




Fitzsons
SELF-RAISING
FLOUR
CWA


Please
Do Not Touch


DEDDINGTON
YCVA
UPPER


PENNIES
FOR
FRIENDSHIP
ASSOCIATED
COUNTRY WOMEN
OF THE WORLD


CWA


CWA
ST LEONARDS CWA
DEVONPORT
EVENING

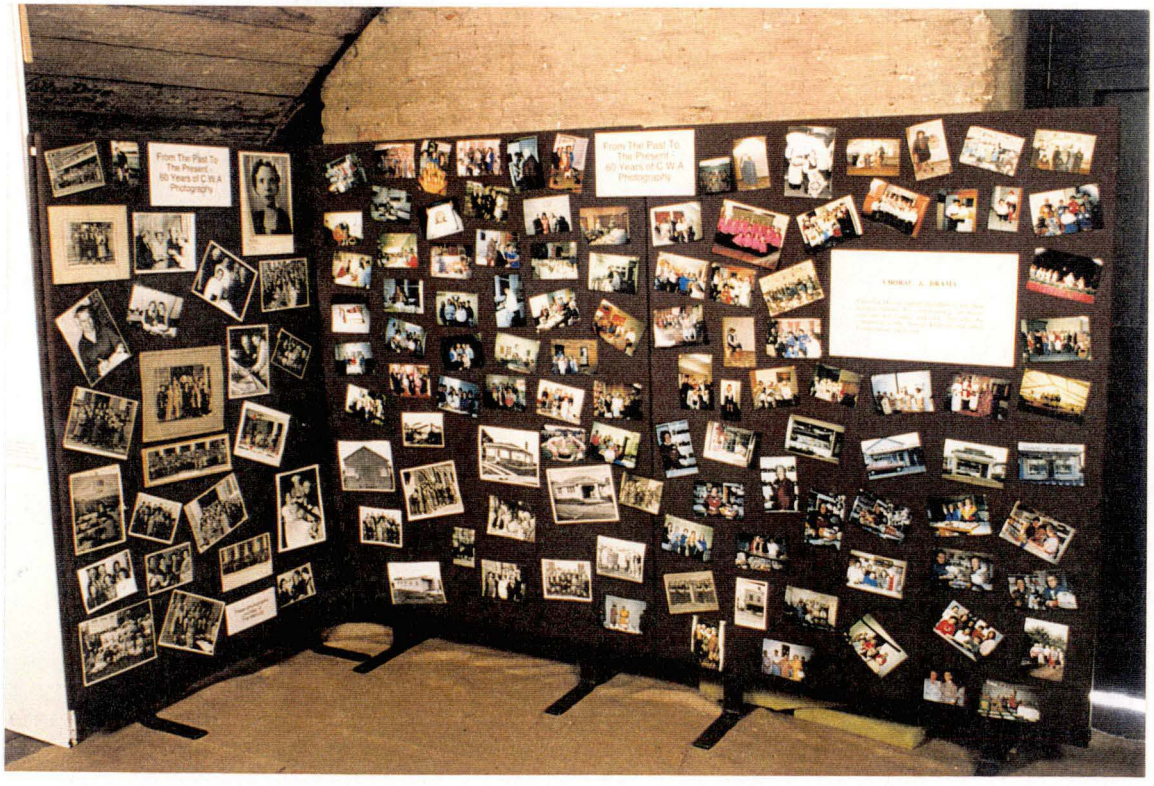

SOUTH EASTERN GROUP
RAILWAY GROUP
CWA
NORTH EASTERN
CWA
East
TAMAR
CWA
LEVIN
MIDLANDS GROUP
CWA
ACWW
CIRCULAR HEAD

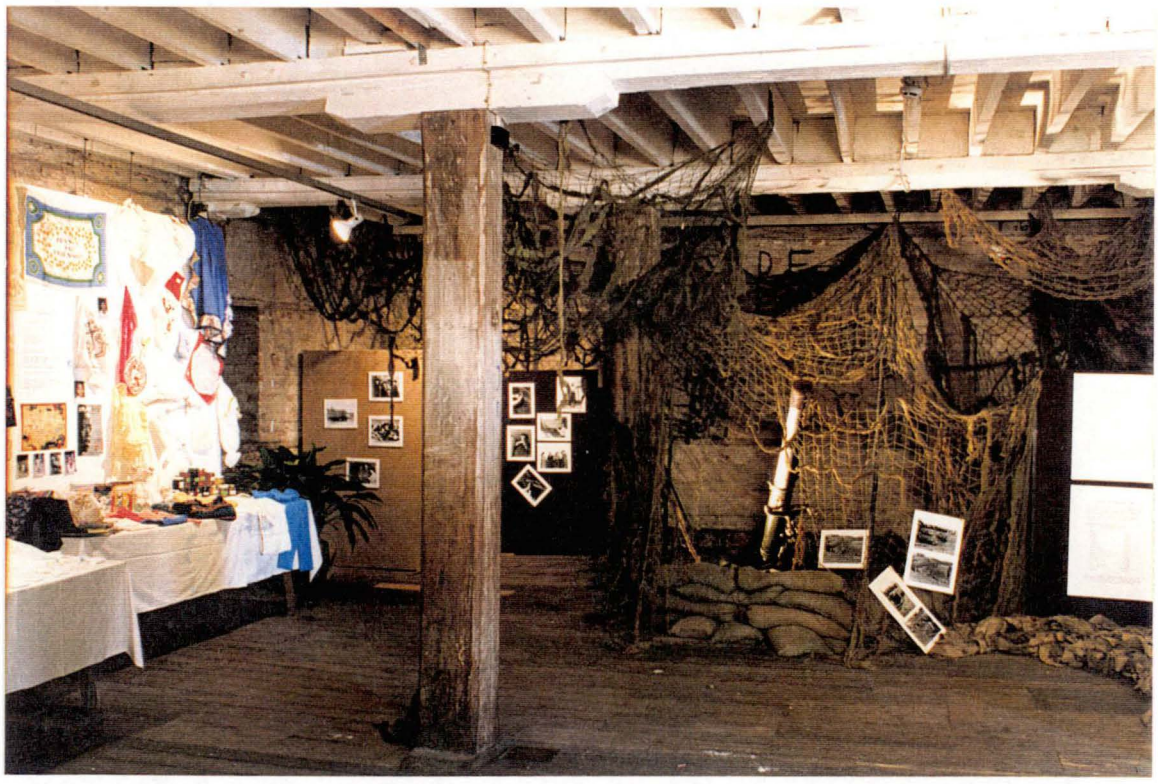

OUR ARCHIVES


Please
Do Not Touch


TIN MINE
ST LEONARDS CWA
DEVONPORT EVENING

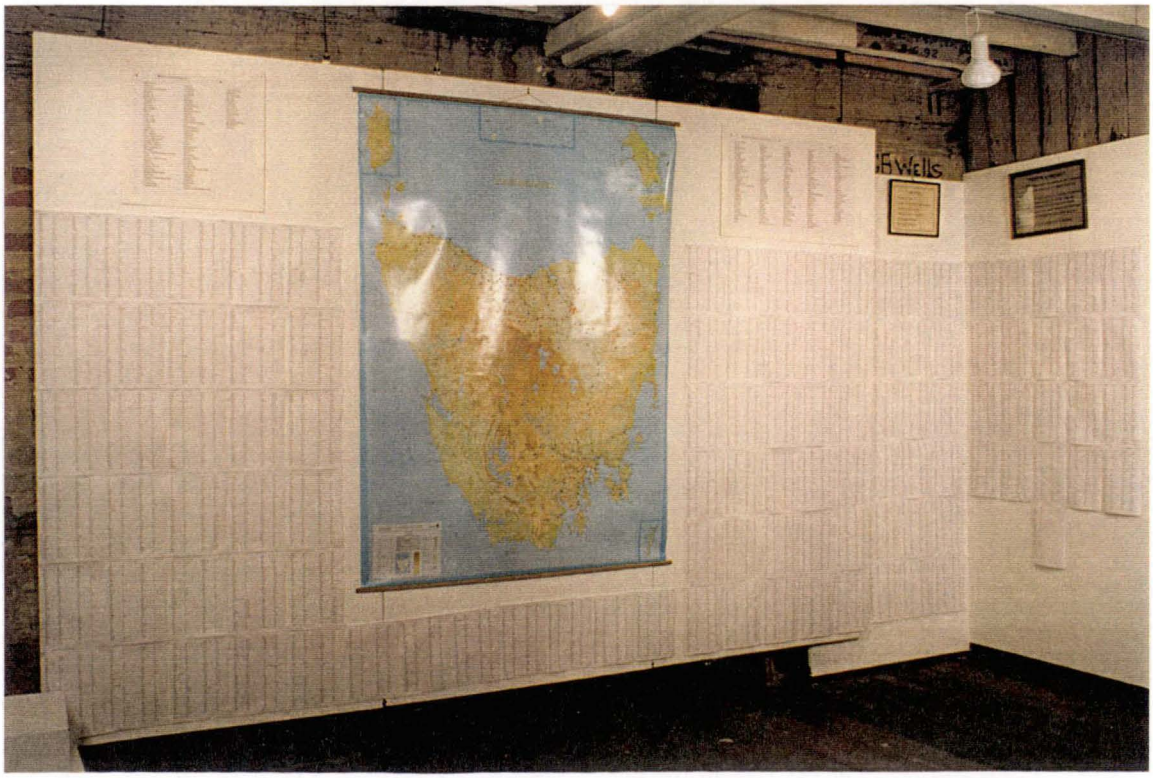

THERAPY DOLLS
Prem Gowns
Wee Care Gowns


From The Past To The Present - 60 Years of C.W.A Photography
From The Past To The Present - 60 Years of C.W.A Photography




THE AUSTRALIAN
CONCERTS FUND


Tasmania


WELLS